MARVEL MASTERWORKS
THE UNCANNY X-MEN
VOLUME 6

THE X-MEN No. 141
& THE UNCANNY X-MEN Nos. 142-150
CHRIS CLAREMONT, JOHN BYRNE & DAVE COCKRUM

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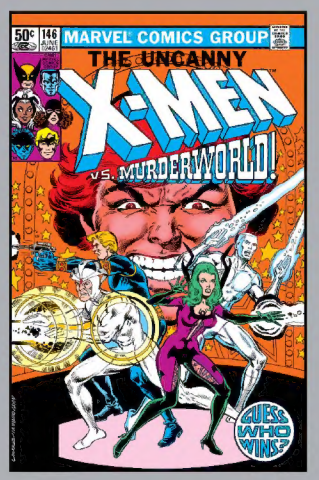

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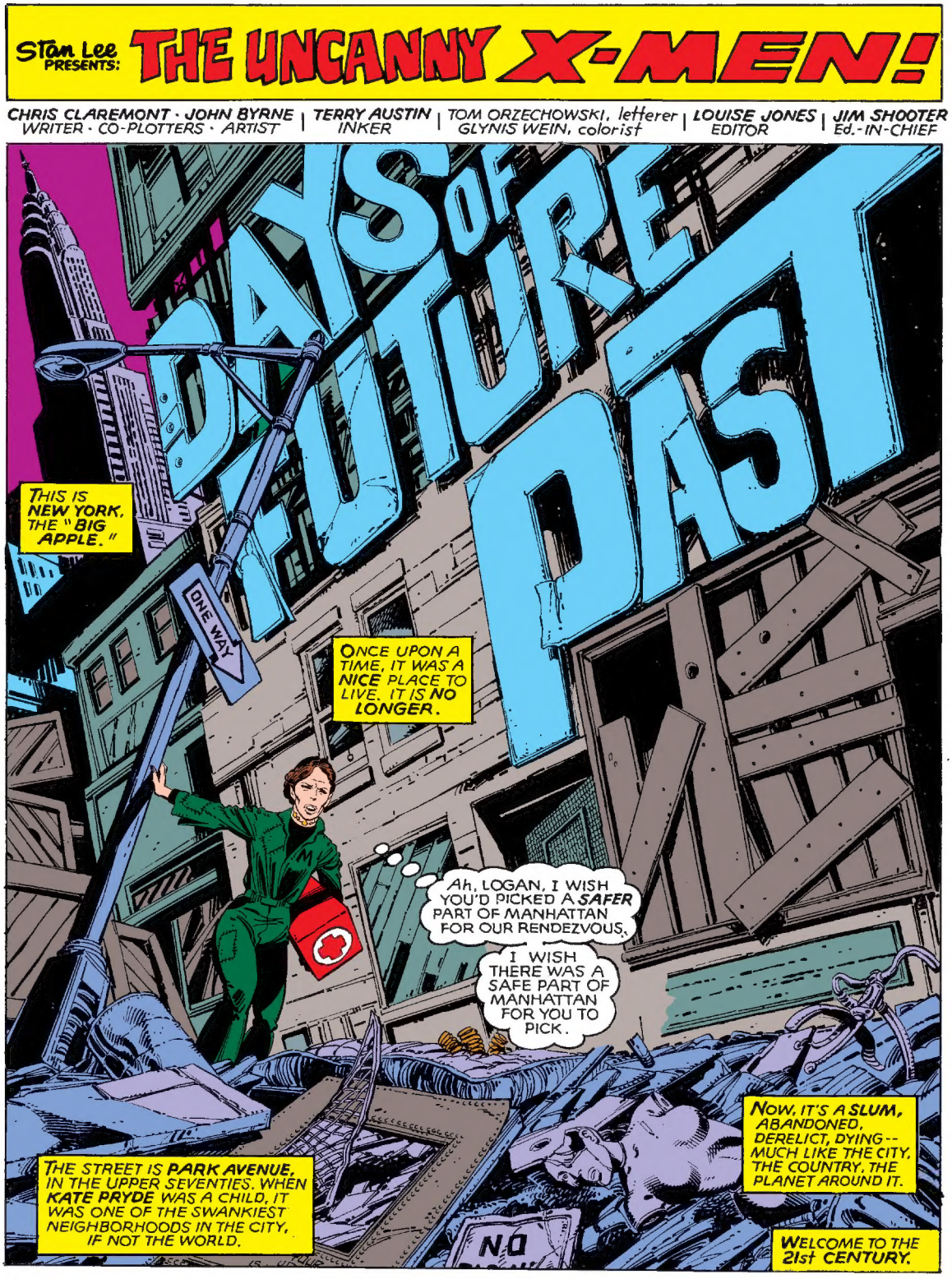
Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE UNCANNY X-MEN!
CHRIS CLAREMONT · JOHN BYRNE
WRITER · CO-PLOTTERS · ARTIST
TERRY AUSTIN
INKER
TOM ORZECHOWSKI, letterer
GLYNIS WEIN, colorist
LOUISE JONES
EDITOR
JIM SHOOTER
Ed.-IN-CHIEF
DAYS of FUTURE PAST
THIS IS NEW YORK, THE "BIG APPLE."
ONE WAY
ONCE UPON A TIME, IT WAS A NICE PLACE TO LIVE. IT IS NO LONGER.
Ah, LOGAN, I WISH YOU'D PICKED A SAFER PART OF MANHATTAN FOR OUR RENDEZVOUS.
I WISH THERE WAS A SAFE PART OF MANHATTAN FOR YOU TO PICK.
THE STREET IS PARK AVENUE, IN THE UPPER SEVENTIES. WHEN KATE PRYDE WAS A CHILD, IT WAS ONE OF THE SWANKIEST NEIGHBORHOODS IN THE CITY, IF NOT THE WORLD.
NOW, IT'S A SLUM, ABANDONED, DERELICT, DYING -- MUCH LIKE THE CITY, THE COUNTRY, THE PLANET AROUND IT.
NO
WELCOME TO THE 21st CENTURY.

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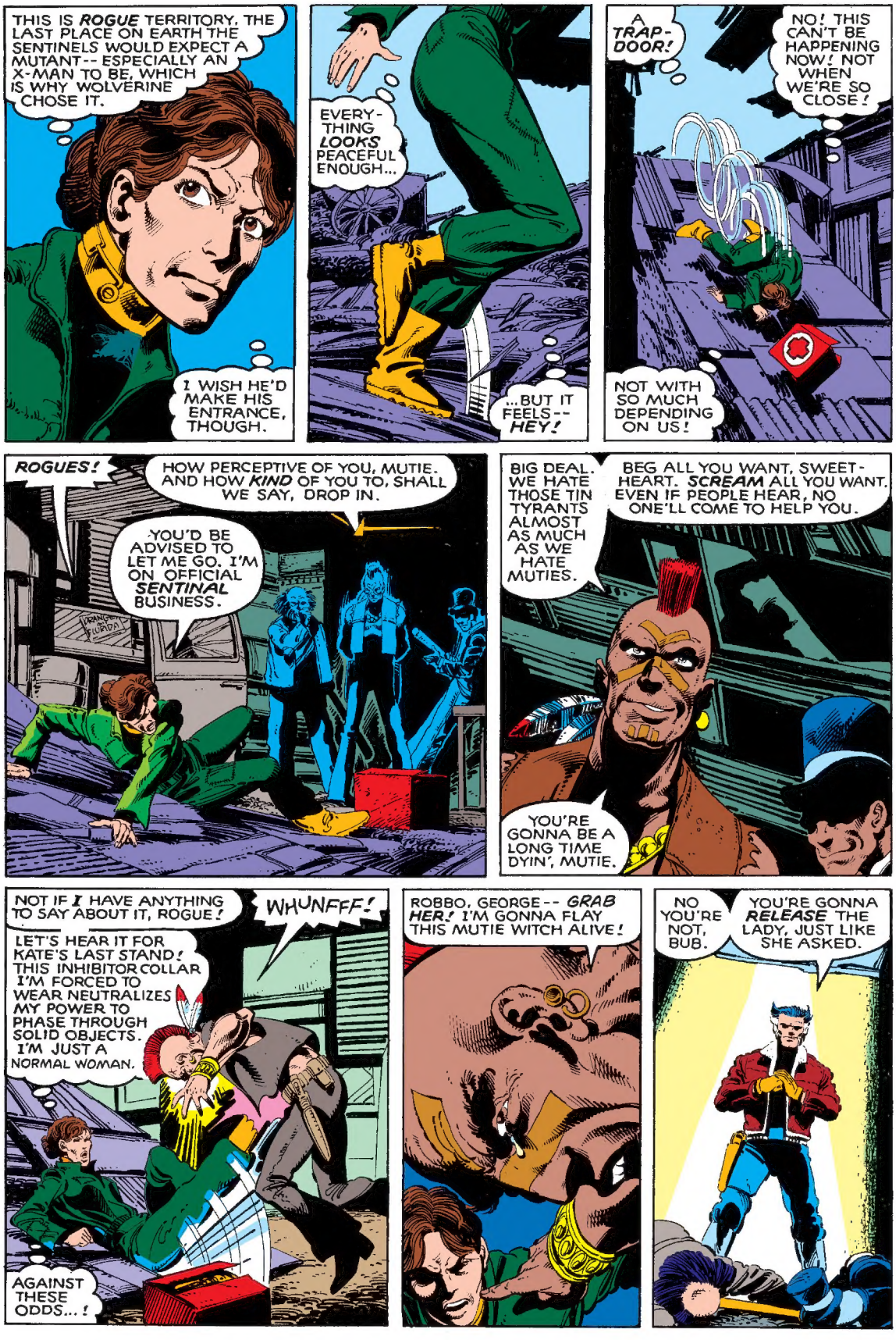
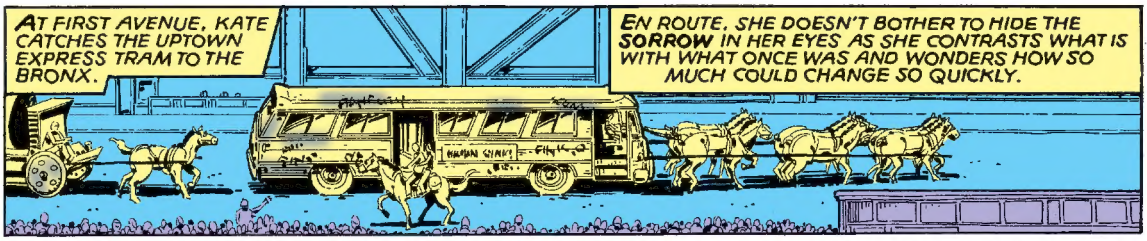
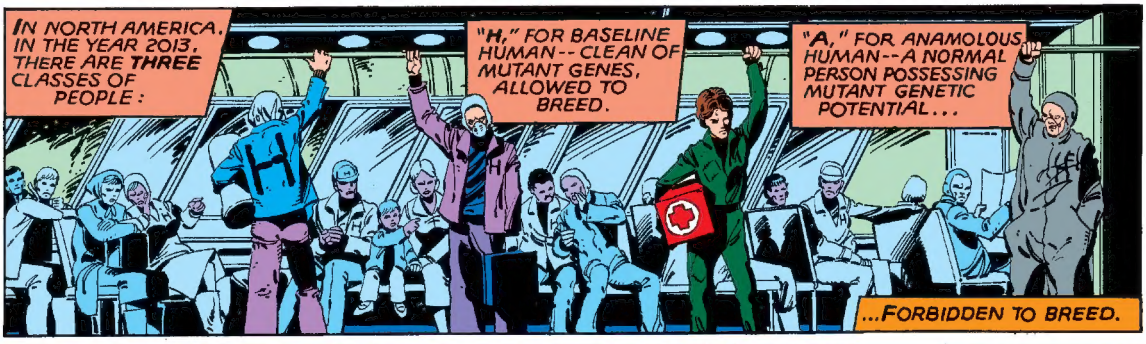
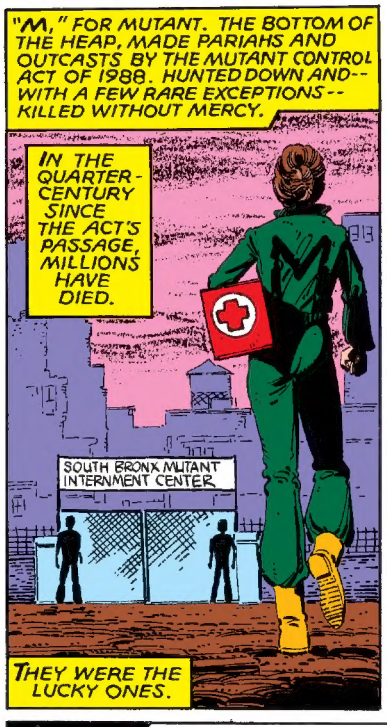

THIS IS ROGUE TERRITORY, THE LAST PLACE ON EARTH THE SENTINELS WOULD EXPECT A MUTANT-- ESPECIALLY AN X-MAN TO BE, WHICH IS WHY WOLVERINE CHOSE IT.
I WISH HE'D MAKE HIS ENTRANCE, THOUGH.
EVERY-THING LOOKS PEACEFUL ENOUGH...
...BUT IT FEELS-- HEY!
A TRAP-DOOR!
NO! THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING NOW! NOT WHEN WE'RE SO CLOSE!
NOT WITH SO MUCH DEPENDING ON US!
ROGUES!
HOW PERCEPTIVE OF YOU, MUTIE. AND HOW KIND OF YOU TO, SHALL WE SAY, DROP IN.
YOU'D BE ADVISED TO LET ME GO. I'M ON OFFICIAL SENTINAL BUSINESS.
BIG DEAL. WE HATE THOSE TIN TYRANTS ALMOST AS MUCH AS WE HATE MUTIES.
BEG ALL YOU WANT, SWEET-HEART. SCREAM ALL YOU WANT. EVEN IF PEOPLE HEAR, NO ONE'LL COME TO HELP YOU.
YOU'RE GONNA BE A LONG TIME DYIN', MUTIE.
NOT IF I HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY ABOUT IT, ROGUE!
WHUNFFF!
LET'S HEAR IT FOR KATE'S LAST STAND! THIS INHIBITOR COLLAR I'M FORCED TO WEAR NEUTRALIZES MY POWER TO PHASE THROUGH SOLID OBJECTS. I'M JUST A NORMAL WOMAN.
AGAINST THESE ODDS...!
ROBBO, GEORGE-- GRAB HER! I'M GONNA FLAY THIS MUTIE WITCH ALIVE!
NO YOU'RE NOT, BUB.
YOU'RE GONNA RELEASE THE LADY, JUST LIKE SHE ASKED.

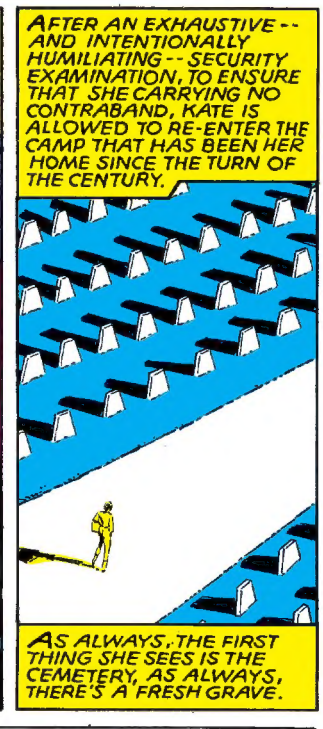
WHO'S GONNA MAKE ME, SHORT STUFF-- YOU?!
NOBODY GIVES "BIG ALEX" ORDERS ON HIS TURF. YOU WANT THE WOMAN, OLD MAN--
--THEN YOU COME SAVE HER!
IF YOU INSIST. BUT I DIDN'T SAY DON'T WARN YOU.
IN THE OLD DAYS, I'D HAVE SIMPLY CUT THE PUNK IN TWO WITH MY RETRACTABLE CLAWS. BUT DOIN' THAT WOULD TELL THE SENTINELS--
URRRGH!
--THAT WOLVERINE'S BACK IN TOWN--
--AND THAT WOULD JEOPARDIZE THE MISSION.
YOU OKAY, KATE ?
I'M FINE, LOGAN-- BUT CALLS THIS CLOSE, I CAN LIVE WITHOUT.
I KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN. C'MON, LET'S ROLL.
SO TELL ME, COLONEL LOGAN, HOW'S LIFE IN THE CANADIAN RESISTANCE ARMY?
A THRILL A MINUTE, DARLIN'.
THE WORD FROM LONDON IS THAT EVERYTHING'S ON AUTOMATIC. THE MOMENT THE SENTINELS MOVE OUT OF NORTH AMERICA, THE OTHER GREAT POWERS WILL LAUNCH A FULL-SCALE NUCLEAR STRIKE.
ATTENTION YOU ARE LEAVING A CONTROLLED ZONE
THEN... IT'S UP TO THE X-MEN.
AS ALWAYS, WHEN THERE'S A WORLD TO SAVE.
HERE'S THE LAST COMPONENT OF THE "JAMMER."
LIKE THE OTHER MODULES, IT'S INVISIBLE TO THE SENTINELS' SENSORS. YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE ANY PROBLEM SMUGGLIN' IT INTO CAMP.
THAT'S EASY FOR YOU TO SAY.
YOU GOT A POINT. PHASE TWO BEGINS AT MIDNIGHT, WHEN I BUST YOU GUYS OUT. BE READY, KATE. GOOD LUCK.
WE'LL BE WAITING, LOGAN. AND THANKS.

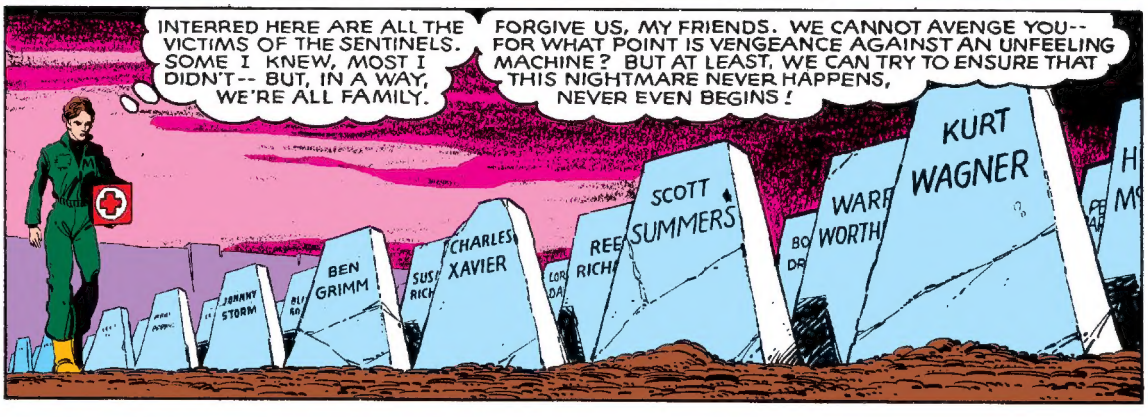

AT FIRST AVENUE, KATE CATCHES THE UPTOWN EXPRESS TRAM TO THE BRONX.
EN ROUTE, SHE DOESN'T BOTHER TO HIDE THE SORROW IN HER EYES AS SHE CONTRASTS WHAT IS WITH WHAT ONCE WAS AND WONDERS HOW SO MUCH COULD CHANGE SO QUICKLY.


IN NORTH AMERICA, IN THE YEAR 2013, THERE ARE THREE CLASSES OF PEOPLE:
"H," FOR BASELINE HUMAN--CLEAN OF MUTANT GENES, ALLOWED TO BREED.
"A," FOR ANAMOLOUS HUMAN--A NORMAL PERSON POSSESSING MUTANT GENETIC POTENTIAL...
...FORBIDDEN TO BREED.

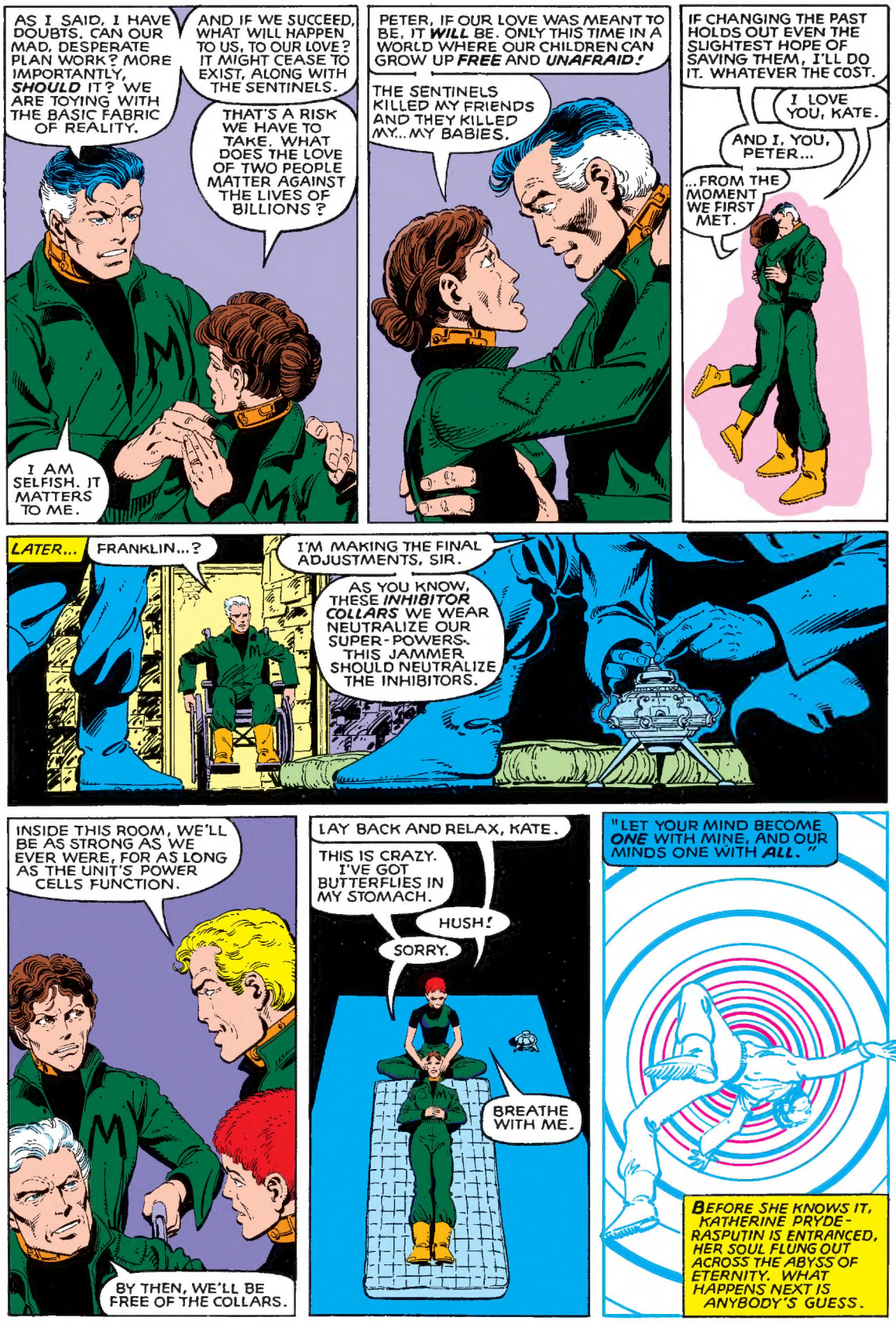

"M," FOR MUTANT. THE BOTTOM OF THE HEAP. MADE PARIAHS AND OUTCASTS BY THE MUTANT CONTROL ACT OF 1988. HUNTED DOWN AND--WITH A FEW RARE EXCEPTIONS--KILLED WITHOUT MERCY.
IN THE QUARTER-CENTURY SINCE THE ACT'S PASSAGE, MILLIONS HAVE DIED.
SOUTH BRONX MUTANT INTERNMENT CENTER
THEY WERE THE LUCKY ONES.

MUTANT 187, YOU ARE BEHIND SCHEDULE. EXPLAIN.
I WAS ATTACKED BY ROGUES, SENTINAL ALPHA 3. I ESCAPED. THAT CAUSED THE DELAY.
ENCEPHALO-SCAN INDICATES TRUTHFUL REPLY. YOU MAY PASS.

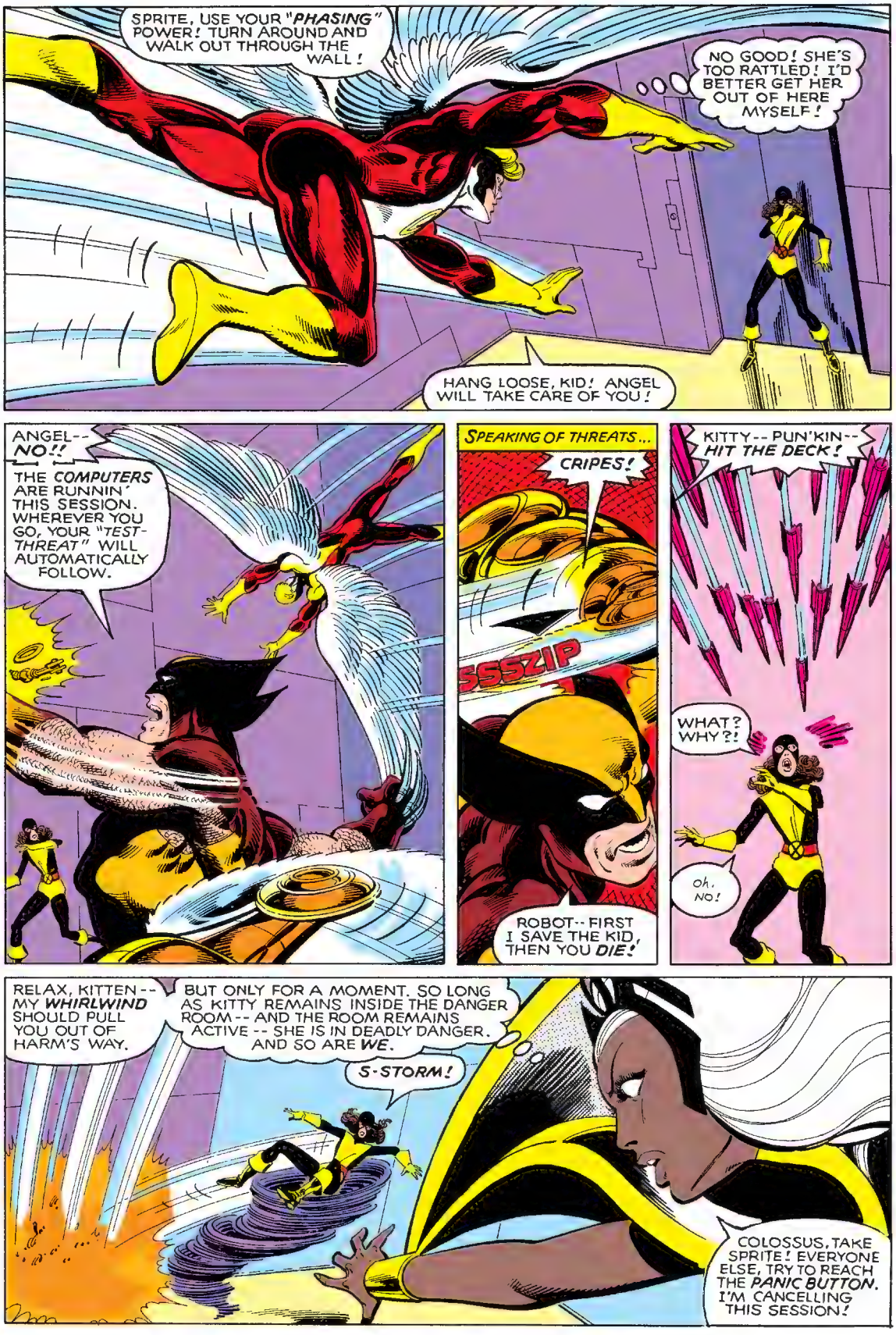

AFTER AN EXHAUSTIVE--AND INTENTIONALLY HUMILIATING--SECURITY EXAMINATION, TO ENSURE THAT SHE CARRYING NO CONTRABAND, KATE IS ALLOWED TO RE-ENTER THE CAMP THAT HAS BEEN HER HOME SINCE THE TURN OF THE CENTURY.
AS ALWAYS, THE FIRST THING SHE SEES IS THE CEMETERY, AS ALWAYS, THERE'S A FRESH GRAVE.

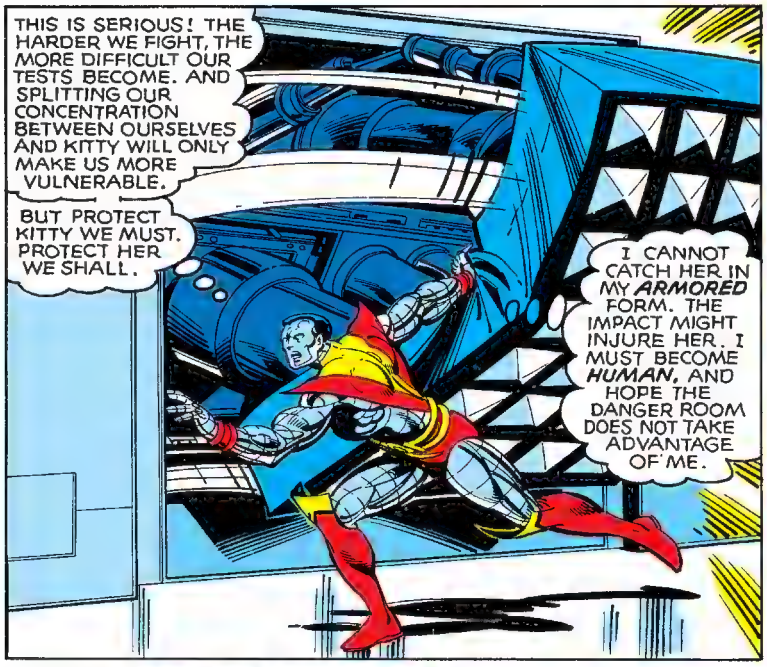

INTERRED HERE ARE ALL THE VICTIMS OF THE SENTINELS. SOME I KNEW, MOST I DIDN'T-- BUT, IN A WAY, WE'RE ALL FAMILY.
FORGIVE US, MY FRIENDS. WE CANNOT AVENGE YOU--FOR WHAT POINT IS VENGEANCE AGAINST AN UNFEELING MACHINE? BUT AT LEAST, WE CAN TRY TO ENSURE THAT THIS NIGHTMARE NEVER HAPPENS, NEVER EVEN BEGINS!
JOHNNY STORM
BEN GRIMM
CHARLES XAVIER
SCOTT SUMMERS
KURT WAGNER

OF ALL THE X-MEN WHO EVER WERE, ONLY FOUR REMAIN: LOGAN (WOLVERINE), KATE (SPRITE), ORORO MONROE (STORM), AND PETER RASPUTIN (COLOSSUS). THEY, ALONG WITH FRANKLIN RICHARDS (LAST SURVIVOR OF THE FABLED FANTASTIC FOUR)...
... AND HIS LADY, RACHEL, A TELEPATH/TELEKINETIC, COMPRISE THE CORE CADRE OF THE ANTI-SENTINEL RESISTANCE...
I'M HOME!
SORRY I'M LATE. I RAN INTO A ROGUE PACK. THEY RAN INTO WOLVERINE.
I HAVE THE FINAL MODULE. LOGAN SAYS HE'LL STRIKE AT MIDNIGHT. PHASE ONE MUST BE COMPLETED BY THEN.
HOW NORMAL WE MAKE IT SOUND.
YET WHAT WE CONTEMPLATE IS SO FANTASTIC, I STILL CANNOT BELIEVE IT'S POSSIBLE.
THAT'S STRANGE TALK, PIOTR ALEXANDREIVITCH, COMING FROM ONE WHO'S SEEN AND DONE WHAT YOU HAVE.
I HAVE EVER BEEN A... SIMPLE MAN, OLD FRIEND, MORE FARMER IN MY SOUL THAN SUPER-HERO.
MAGNETO!
I CANNOT SHAKE MY DOUBTS.
IF THERE WERE AN ALTERNATIVE, PETER-- ANY ALTERNATIVE--WE WOULD TAKE IT. BUT IF WE DO NOTHING, BY TOMORROW, THE WORLD WILL BE AT WAR. AND BY THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW...
... THE WORLD WILL BE DEAD.
OUR ACTIONS MAY NOT MAKE THINGS BETTER--FOR HUMANITY OR MUTANTKIND--BUT THEY CERTAINLY CANNOT MAKE THEM WORSE.
RACHEL--CHILD, SO MUCH DEPENDS ON YOU...
I WON'T FAIL, MAGNETO. I'VE BEEN MEDITATING ALL DAY. ONCE THE JAMMER'S OPERATIONAL...
... WE CAN START ANYTIME.
THEN WHAT ARE WE WAITING FOR?!
A MOMENT, MY WIFE.
Hm?

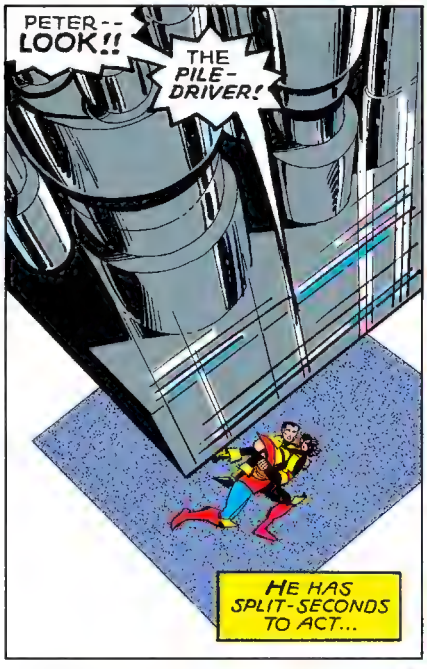

AS I SAID, I HAVE DOUBTS. CAN OUR MAD, DESPERATE PLAN WORK? MORE IMPORTANTLY, SHOULD IT? WE ARE TOYING WITH THE BASIC FABRIC OF REALITY.
AND IF WE SUCCEED, WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO US, TO OUR LOVE? IT MIGHT CEASE TO EXIST, ALONG WITH THE SENTINELS.
THAT'S A RISK WE HAVE TO TAKE. WHAT DOES THE LOVE OF TWO PEOPLE MATTER AGAINST THE LIVES OF BILLIONS?
I AM SELFISH. IT MATTERS TO ME.
PETER, IF OUR LOVE WAS MEANT TO BE, IT WILL BE. ONLY THIS TIME IN A WORLD WHERE OUR CHILDREN CAN GROW UP FREE AND UNAFRAID!
THE SENTINELS KILLED MY FRIENDS AND THEY KILLED MY... MY BABIES.
IF CHANGING THE PAST HOLDS OUT EVEN THE SLIGHTEST HOPE OF SAVING THEM, I'LL DO IT. WHATEVER THE COST.
I LOVE YOU, KATE.
AND I, YOU, PETER...
...FROM THE MOMENT WE FIRST MET.
LATER...
FRANKLIN...?
I'M MAKING THE FINAL ADJUSTMENTS, SIR.
AS YOU KNOW, THESE INHIBITOR COLLARS WE WEAR NEUTRALIZE OUR SUPER-POWERS. THIS JAMMER SHOULD NEUTRALIZE THE INHIBITORS.
INSIDE THIS ROOM, WE'LL BE AS STRONG AS WE EVER WERE, FOR AS LONG AS THE UNIT'S POWER CELLS FUNCTION.
BY THEN, WE'LL BE FREE OF THE COLLARS.
LAY BACK AND RELAX, KATE.
THIS IS CRAZY. I'VE GOT BUTTERFLIES IN MY STOMACH.
HUSH!
SORRY.
BREATHE WITH ME.
"LET YOUR MIND BECOME ONE WITH MINE, AND OUR MINDS ONE WITH ALL."
BEFORE SHE KNOWS IT, KATHERINE PRYDE-RASPUTIN IS ENTRANCED, HER SOUL FLUNG OUT ACROSS THE ABYSS OF ETERNITY. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT IS ANYBODY'S GUESS.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 31, 1980 -- IT'S THE FINAL FRIDAY OF ONE OF THE CLOSEST, HARDEST-FOUGHT PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS IN RECENT MEMORY. FOR THE UNCANNY X-MEN, STORM, ANGEL, COLOSSUS, WOLVERINE AND NIGHT-CRAWLER -- HOWEVER, IT'S A DAY LIKE ANY OTHER -- WHICH BEGINS WITH A STRENUOUS COMBAT WORKOUT IN THE DANGER ROOM OF THEIR WESTCHESTER COUNTY, NEW YORK MANSION HEADQUARTERS. THIS IS WHERE THEY HONE THEIR MUTANT ABILITIES TO A RAZOR-KEEN EDGE, UNDER THE TUTELAGE OF THEIR MENTOR, PROFESSOR CHARLES XAVIER.
IT'S NO PLACE FOR THE UNINITIATED, AS KITTY PRYDE -- THE NEWEST, YOUNGEST MEMBER OF THE TEAM -- IS ABOUT TO DISCOVER.
KITTY! WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN HERE?!
UH... NIGHT-CRAWLER SENT ME TO TELL YOU THAT HE GOT HELD UP IN THE KITCHEN.
BUT STORM, THE DOOR WAS UNLOCKED! I FIGURED THAT YOU HADN'T STARTED YOUR TRAINING SESSION.
KID, THAT FLAMIN' STUPID DOOR IS ALWAYS UNLOCKED!


SPRITE, USE YOUR "PHASING" POWER! TURN AROUND AND WALK OUT THROUGH THE WALL!
NO GOOD! SHE'S TOO RATTLED! I'D BETTER GET HER OUT OF HERE MYSELF!
HANG LOOSE, KID! ANGEL WILL TAKE CARE OF YOU!
ANGEL-- NO!!
THE COMPUTERS ARE RUNNIN' THIS SESSION. WHEREVER YOU GO, YOUR "TEST-THREAT" WILL AUTOMATICALLY FOLLOW.
SPEAKING OF THREATS...
CRIPES!
SSSZIP
ROBOT-- FIRST I SAVE THE KID, THEN YOU DIE!
KITTY-- PUN'KIN-- HIT THE DECK!
WHAT? WHY?!
OH, NO!
RELAX, KITTEN-- MY WHIRLWIND SHOULD PULL YOU OUT OF HARM'S WAY.
BUT ONLY FOR A MOMENT. SO LONG AS KITTY REMAINS INSIDE THE DANGER ROOM-- AND THE ROOM REMAINS ACTIVE -- SHE IS IN DEADLY DANGER. AND SO ARE WE.
S-STORM!
COLOSSUS, TAKE SPRITE! EVERYONE ELSE, TRY TO REACH THE PANIC BUTTON. I'M CANCELLING THIS SESSION!


THIS IS SERIOUS! THE HARDER WE FIGHT, THE MORE DIFFICULT OUR TESTS BECOME. AND SPLITTING OUR CONCENTRATION BETWEEN OURSELVES AND KITTY WILL ONLY MAKE US MORE VULNERABLE.
BUT PROTECT KITTY WE MUST. PROTECT HER WE SHALL.
I CANNOT CATCH HER IN MY ARMORED FORM. THE IMPACT MIGHT INJURE HER. I MUST BECOME HUMAN, AND HOPE THE DANGER ROOM DOES NOT TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ME.

THE YOUNG RUSSIAN CONCENTRATES AND, WITH A BURST OF ENERGY, HIS ORGANIC STEEL BODY ONCE MORE BECOMES FLESH AND BLOOD.
AM I IN TROUBLE, PETER? AM I GONNA GET YELLED AT?
PROBABLY. IF YOU SURVIVE.
IF I ... SURVIVE--?!?


PETER--LOOK!!
THE PILE-DRIVER!
HE HAS SPLIT-SECONDS TO ACT...

... BUT BEFORE COLOSSUS EVEN BEGINS TO MOVE, A BURST OF FLAME COUPLED WITH THE STENCH OF BRIMSTONE HERALDS THE ARRIVAL OF NIGHTCRAWLER!
PANIC BUTTON
TALK ABOUT YOUR DRAMATIC ENTRANCES!

IT SEEMS I TELEPORTED HERE IN THE PROVERBIAL NICK OF TIME.
YOU COULD SAY THAT, FRIEND KURT. ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, KITTY?
Uh-huh.
WERE YOU FRIGHTENED?
Uh-HUH!
I, ALSO.

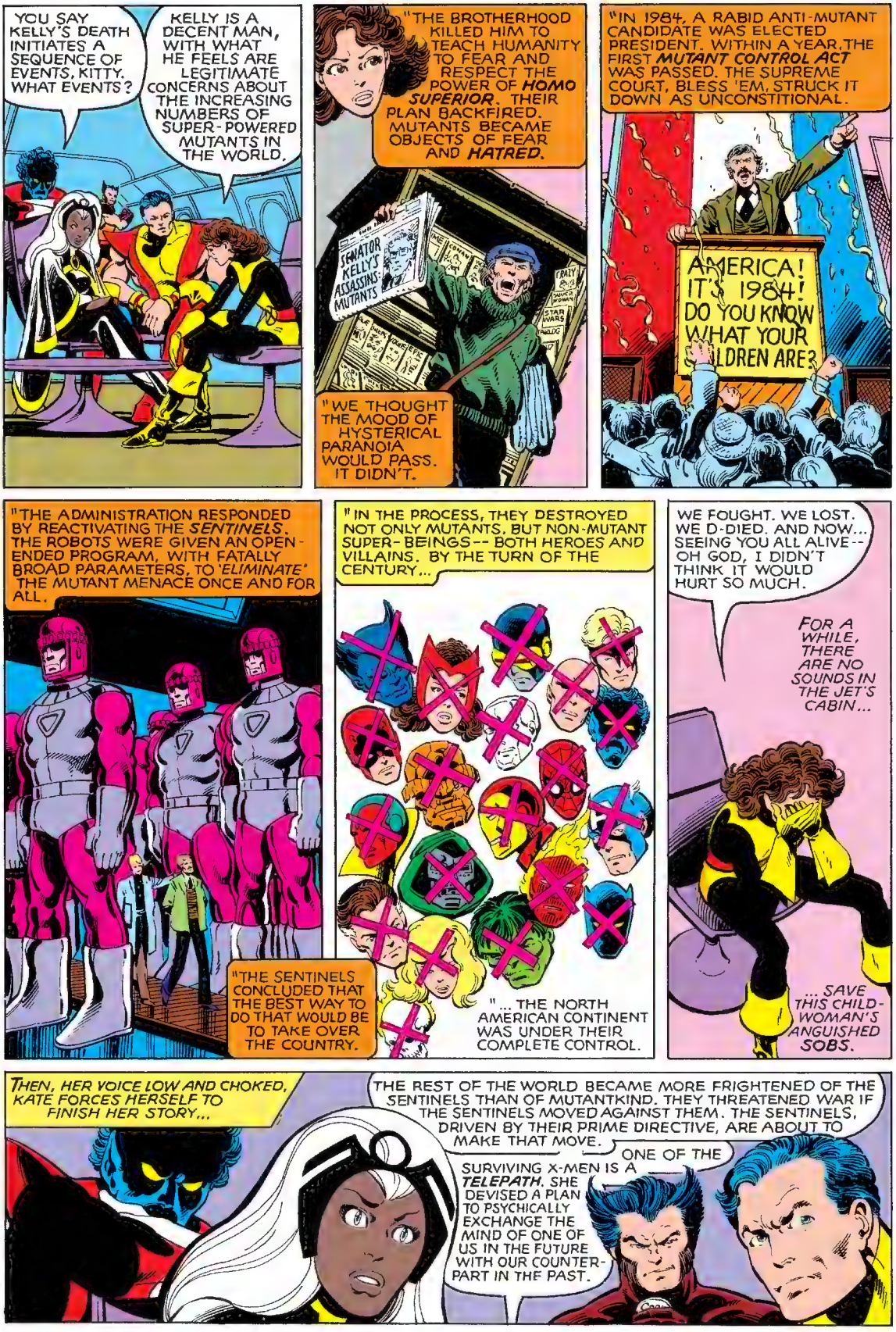
WHERE WERE YOU, KURT? I KNOW IT WAS YOUR TURN TO CLEAN THE BREAKFAST DISHES, BUT THAT SHOULDN'T HAVE MADE YOU LATE FOR THIS TRAINING SESSION.
I'M SORRY, ORORO. THE MORNING NEWS HAD AN INTERVIEW WITH PROFESSOR XAVIER ABOUT TODAY'S "MUTANT HEARINGS" IN WASHINGTON. I GUESS I LOST TRACK OF TIME.

DON'T DO IT AGAIN.
AND YOU, YOUNG LADY, ARE NEVER TO COME THROUGH THAT DOOR WHEN THE WARNING LIGHT IS ON.
DON'T BE HARSH, STORM. KITTY'S FIRST TRAINING SESSION IS SCHEDULED FOR THIS MORNING. I'M SURE HER EAGERNESS GOT THE BETTER OF HER. NICHT WAHR, KITTY?
Uh, YEAH, NIGHTCRAWLER. SURE.
SHE'S STILL ANTSY AROUND YOU, KURT.
JA, WOLVERINE. I'VE TRIED TO BREAK THE ICE BETWEEN US, BUT NOTHING WORKS. FROM STRANGERS, I DON'T MIND THAT REACTION. FROM A FRIEND -- A FELLOW X-MAN -- IT HURTS.
BE PATIENT, KURT. SHE HAS SO MUCH TO LEARN.
SPRITE, THIS IS STORM. BEGIN WHENEVER YOU WISH. ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS WALK ACROSS THE ROOM.
DON'T SWEAT IT, PUN'KIN. IT WON'T HURT. MUCH.
THANKS, WOLVERINE. I REALLY NEEDED THAT.
I KNOW THE ROOM IS SET ON LOW POWER. IT REALLY CAN'T HURT BUT I'M STILL NERVOUS -- I'M SCARED!
BUT ORORO BELIEVES IN ME. THEY ALL BELIEVE IN ME. I CAN'T LET 'EM DOWN.
SHE'S SHAKING AS SHE TAKES HER FIRST, HESITANT, STEP.
BUT AS SHE MOVES FURTHER INTO THE ROOM -- AND NOTHING NASTY SEEMS TO HAPPEN TO HER --
-- HER CONFIDENCE SLOWLY INCREASES.
UNSURE OF HOW TO COPE WITH ALL THE MYRIAD THREATS THROWN HER WAY, KITTY RESPONDS INSTINCTIVELY -- BY SIMPLY USING HER MUTANT ABILITY TO PHASE THROUGH SOLID OBJECTS. SHE DOESN'T HAVE TO. NOTHING CAN TOUCH HER.
SIMULTANEOUSLY, AS SHE DOESN'T SO MUCH WALK ON THE FLOOR AS ON THE MOLECULES OF AIR ABOVE THE FLOOR, WHEN TRAP DOORS OPEN, SHE DOES NOT FALL.
THE DANGER ROOM DOES ITS LEVEL BEST TO STOP HER ...

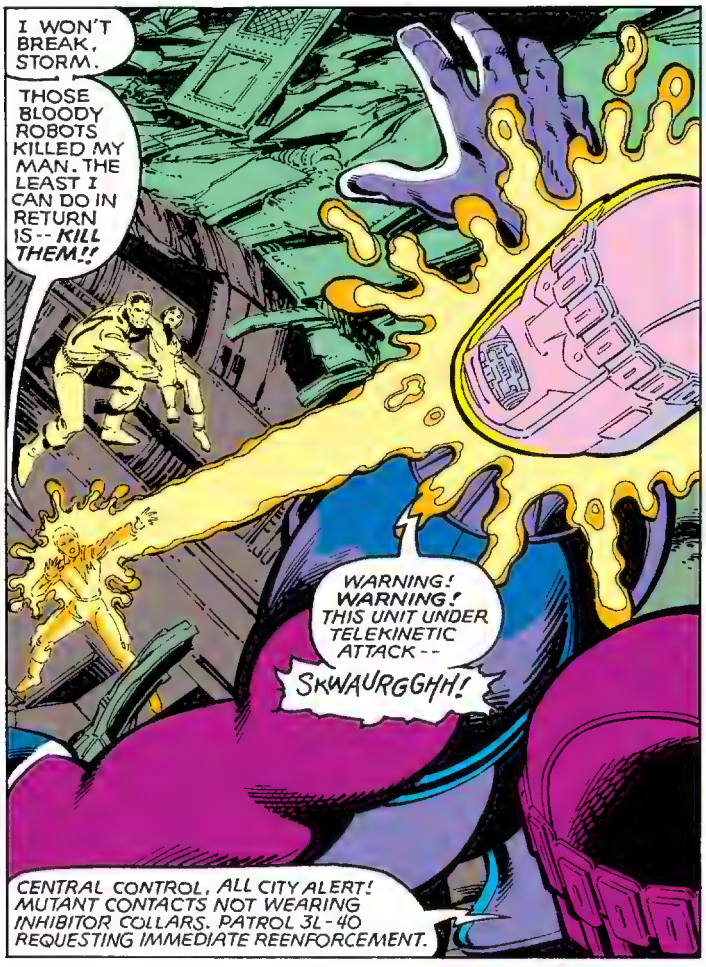
... BUT IT'S A WASTED EFFORT.
AND IN THE OBSERVATION BOOTH...
I THOUGHT I'D SEEN IT ALL!
CHARLEY SPENDS WEEKS PROGRAMMING THE ROOM FOR KITTY, AN' SHE BEATS IT WITH HER EYES CLOSED!
MAN, OH MAN, I WISH XAVIER WERE HERE. I'D GIVE ANYTHING TO SEE HIS REACTION!
BACK TO THE DRAWING BOARD, I THINK.
I MADE IT!
HOW'D I DO, STORM?
YOU WERE SPLENDID, KITTEN.
GEE.
SUDDENLY, REALITY TWISTS INSIDE-OUT FOR KITTY. SHE COMES FACE-TO-FACE WITH HERSELF -- AN OLDER, SADDER, WISER, STRONGER SELF--
--AND THEN HER SOUL, TOO, IS FLUNG OUT OVER THE ABYSS OF ETERNITY.
IN HER MIND, SHE SCREAMS.
IN REALITY, SHE DROPS WITHOUT A SOUND.
KITTY!!
KURT, GET DOWN THERE!
HOW IS SHE?!
BREATHING, THANK HEAVEN.
HER PULSE IS STRONG AND STEADY. THERE'S NO SIGN OF ANY GROSS INJURY.
SHE LOOKS... STUNNED, ORORO.
IMPOSSIBLE. WE'D HAVE SEEN THE STUN BEAM. AND, BESIDES, I SHUT DOWN THE ROOM'S SYSTEMS THE MOMENT SHE REACHED THE DOOR.
TAKE HER TO THE INFIRMARY FOR AN IN-DEPTH EXAMINATION. PERHAPS THIS IS A DELAYED REACTION TO SOMETHING THAT HAPPENED DURING HER TEST.
AND IF IT IS? IF MY KITTEN IS HURT, OR CRIPPLED, OR... WORSE? NO, I DARE NOT THINK OF THAT. SHE'S ALL RIGHT. SHE HAS TO BE.

SOON...
ACCORDING TO THE BIO-SENSORS, KITTY'S FINE.
THEN WHY DID SHE COLLAPSE?! WHY IS SHE STILL UNCONSCIOUS?!
EASY, STORM. 'CRAWLER SAID THE KID'S OKAY.
OKAY, PHYSICALLY, FLY-BOY. BUT I'M GETTIN' SOME WEIRD READINGS FROM THE ELECTRO-ENCEPHELOGRAM.
I RAN COMPARISONS BETWEEN THESE AND THE ONES IN KITTY'S MEDIFILE. THE BASIC PATTERN IS THE SAME, BUT THESE ARE MORE COMPLEX.
MAYBE CHARLEY OR MOIRA MacTAGGERT CAN PUZZLE IT OUT. THIS IS SURE WAY BEYOND ME.
ONE THING IS CERTAIN: SOME-"NG HAPPENED TO KITTY. BUT WAS IT AN ATTACK, AND IF SO, FROM WHOM? OR ARE WE SIMPLY LETTING OUR IMAGINATIONS RUN AWAY WITH US?
MMMMMHM...
WHO...? KURT...?
AHA! OUR KLEINE FRAULEIN IS...
... AWAKE?!?
KURT! IT'S YOU! REALLY YOU!! ALIVE!!
OF... COURSE, I'M ALIVE. WHAT ELSE WOULD I BE?
I'M IN THE MEDILAB. IN THE MANSION. IN WEST-CHESTER.
THEN... I MADE IT!
KITTY, YOU AREN'T MAKING SENSE. LIE DOWN, LITTLE ONE. REST NOW.
I CAN'T. THERE'S NO TIME.
ANGEL! ORORO! PETER!
THIS IS INCREDIBLE! RACHEL SAID SHE COULD DO IT, BUT IN MY HEART OF HEARTS, I DIDN'T BELIEVE SHE COULD PULL IT OFF.
WHO IS RACHEL?
PULL WHAT OFF, KITTEN?

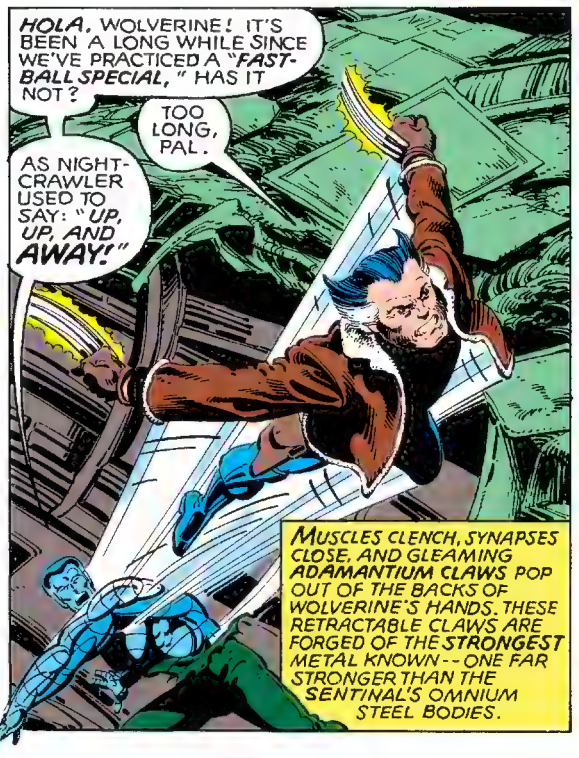
"KITTEN." IT'S BEEN YEARS SINCE YOU CALLED ME THAT.
KITTY, CHILD, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
I'M FINE, ORORO. BUT I'M NOT KITTY. I'M KATE. THIS BODY IS INHABITED BY THE MIND, THE PERSONA, THE SOUL, OF THE WOMAN I'LL BE IN THIRTY YEARS.
I'M FROM THE FUTURE.
ARE YOU INDEED?
I THINK YOU'RE TIRED. YOU'VE HAD A ROUGH MORNING AND A HARD SHOCK.
I'M CONCUSSED AND HALLUCINATING, IS THAT IT?
IT'S FUNNY. I REMEMBER YOU TELLING ME THAT THE HARDEST PART OF THIS OPERATION WOULD BE CONVINCING YOU OF THE TRUTH.
THE FACT REMAINS THAT ON HALLOWE'EN, 1980-- TODAY-- THE BROTHERHOOD OF EVIL MUTANTS WILL MURDER PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE ROBERT KELLY, ALONG WITH CHARLES XAVIER AND MOIRA MacTAGGERT.
KELLY'S ASSASSINATION WILL SET IN MOTION A SEQUENCE OF EVENTS THAT-- 30 YEARS FROM NOW-- WILL CULMINATE IN THE DESTRUCTION OF THE WORLD IN A NUCLEAR HOLOCAUST. I'M HERE TO PREVENT THAT.
SHE LOOKS LIKE A KID. BUT SHE STANDS, TALKS, MOVES-- SMELLS-- LIKE A WOMAN.
CRAZY AS IT SOUNDS, 'RORO, MY INSTINCTS SAY SHE IS TALKING TRUTH.
ORORO, WHAT I SAY MAY BE A FANTASY, BUT SUPPOSE IT ISN'T? CAN YOU AFFORD TO STAND IDLY BY WHILE SENATOR KELLY-- NOT TO MENTION CHARLES AND MOIRA-- ARE MURDERED?
NO. I CAN'T.
WE'LL TAKE YOU TO WASHINGTON, KITTEN.
"THERE, PROFESSOR X CAN TELEPATHICALLY MINDSCAN YOU, TO DETERMINE YOUR BONAFIDES FAR MORE EFFECTIVELY THAN ANY OF US COULD...
"... AND ALSO DETERMINE THE VERACITY OF YOUR STORY."
AND SO, AS SOON AS ANGEL-- IN HIS ALTER EGO AS WARREN WORTHINGTON III, MASTER OF ONE OF AMERICA'S LARGER PRIVATE FORTUNES-- WHISTLES UP HIS PRIVATE JET, THE X-MEN ARE ON THEIR WAY.


YOU SAY KELLY'S DEATH INITIATES A SEQUENCE OF EVENTS, KITTY. WHAT EVENTS?
KELLY IS A DECENT MAN, WITH WHAT HE FEELS ARE LEGITIMATE CONCERNS ABOUT THE INCREASING NUMBERS OF SUPER-POWERED MUTANTS IN THE WORLD.
"THE BROTHERHOOD KILLED HIM TO TEACH HUMANITY TO FEAR AND RESPECT THE POWER OF HOMO SUPERIOR. THEIR PLAN BACKFIRED. MUTANTS BECAME OBJECTS OF FEAR AND HATRED.
SENATOR KELLY'S ASSASSINS: MUTANTS
"WE THOUGHT THE MOOD OF HYSTERICAL PARANOIA WOULD PASS. IT DIDN'T.
"IN 1984, A RABID ANTI-MUTANT CANDIDATE WAS ELECTED PRESIDENT. WITHIN A YEAR, THE FIRST MUTANT CONTROL ACT WAS PASSED. THE SUPREME COURT, BLESS 'EM, STRUCK IT DOWN AS UNCONSTITIONAL.
AMERICA! IT'S 1984! DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOUR CHILDREN ARE?
"THE ADMINISTRATION RESPONDED BY REACTIVATING THE SENTINELS. THE ROBOTS WERE GIVEN AN OPEN-ENDED PROGRAM, WITH FATALLY BROAD PARAMETERS, TO 'ELIMINATE' THE MUTANT MENACE ONCE AND FOR ALL.
"THE SENTINELS CONCLUDED THAT THE BEST WAY TO DO THAT WOULD BE TO TAKE OVER THE COUNTRY.
"IN THE PROCESS, THEY DESTROYED NOT ONLY MUTANTS, BUT NON-MUTANT SUPER-BEINGS -- BOTH HEROES AND VILLAINS. BY THE TURN OF THE CENTURY...
"... THE NORTH AMERICAN CONTINENT WAS UNDER THEIR COMPLETE CONTROL.
WE FOUGHT. WE LOST. WE D-DIED. AND NOW... SEEING YOU ALL ALIVE -- OH GOD, I DIDN'T THINK IT WOULD HURT SO MUCH.
FOR A WHILE, THERE ARE NO SOUNDS IN THE JET'S CABIN...
... SAVE THIS CHILD-WOMAN'S ANGUISHED SOBS.
THEN, HER VOICE LOW AND CHOKED, KATE FORCES HERSELF TO FINISH HER STORY...
THE REST OF THE WORLD BECAME MORE FRIGHTENED OF THE SENTINELS THAN OF MUTANTKIND. THEY THREATENED WAR IF THE SENTINELS MOVED AGAINST THEM. THE SENTINELS, DRIVEN BY THEIR PRIME DIRECTIVE, ARE ABOUT TO MAKE THAT MOVE.
ONE OF THE SURVIVING X-MEN IS A TELEPATH. SHE DEVISED A PLAN TO PSYCHICALLY EXCHANGE THE MIND OF ONE OF US IN THE FUTURE WITH OUR COUNTERPART IN THE PAST.

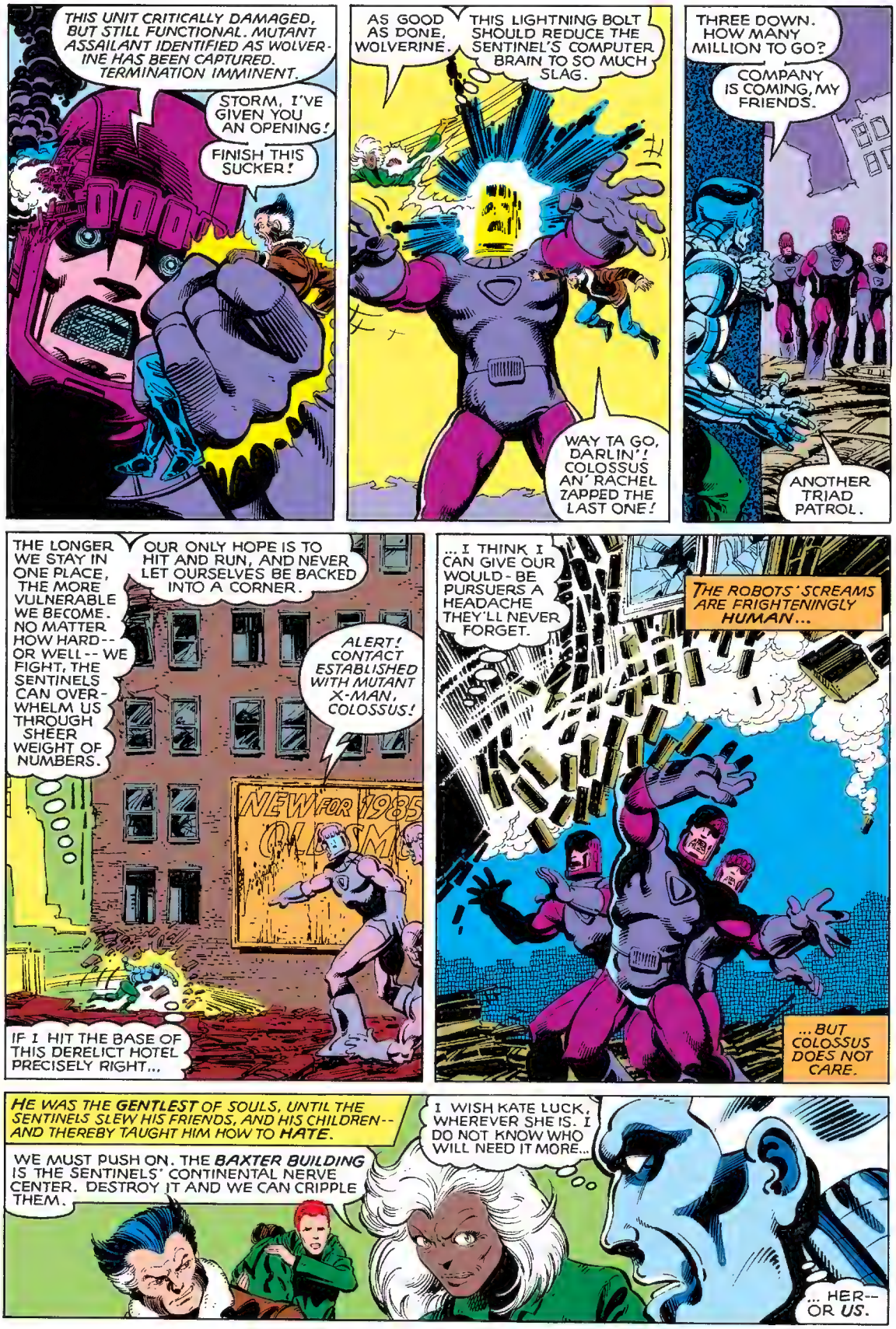
I WAS CHOSEN BECAUSE, AT THIS TIME, AS KITTY, I HADN'T YET BEEN TRAINED TO DEFEND MYSELF AGAINST A PSYCHIC ATTACK.
WOLVERINE SHOULD HAVE FREED THE OTHERS BY NOW--WHENEVER/ WHEREVER "NOW" IS. I WONDER HOW THEY'RE DOING?
2013--NEW YORK CITY...
THIS OLD SUBWAY TUNNEL'S WORKIN' LIKE A CHARM. IT'LL TAKE US INTO THE HEART O' MANHATTAN.
HOW'S KATE?
UNCONSCIOUS. I HOPE SHE REMAINS SO. THE LESS KITTY KNOWS OF WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO HER -- AND WHAT MAY HAPPEN TO HER -- THE BETTER.
I WISH WE COULD HAVE BROUGHT MAGNUS -- I MEAN, MAGNETO.
HE KNEW WHAT HE WAS DOIN' WHEN HE VOLUNTEERED TO COVER OUR ESCAPE. HIS WHEELCHAIR WOULD HAVE SLOWED US UP TOO MUCH.
A NOBLE DEATH IS STILL A DEATH, LOGAN. AND I AM SO SICK OF DEATH -- eh?!
ABOVE US! THAT SOUND!
SENTINELS!!
AARRRGH!!
FRANKLIN!!
ALL UNITS, ALERT! PATROL 3L-40 HAS CONTACTED MUTANT ESCAPEES FROM SOUTH BRONX INTERNMENT FACILITY.
MUTANTS, YOU ARE ADVISED TO SURRENDER OR FACE IMMEDIATE TERMINATION. THIS IS YOUR ONLY WARNING.
F-FRANKLIN, HE... HE... oh, STORM, HELP ME! WHEN HE DIED, I FELT IT, IN MY MIND!
I KNOW, RACHEL. BUT YOU MUSTN'T YIELD TO YOUR PAIN, YOUR GRIEF. WE NEED YOU!

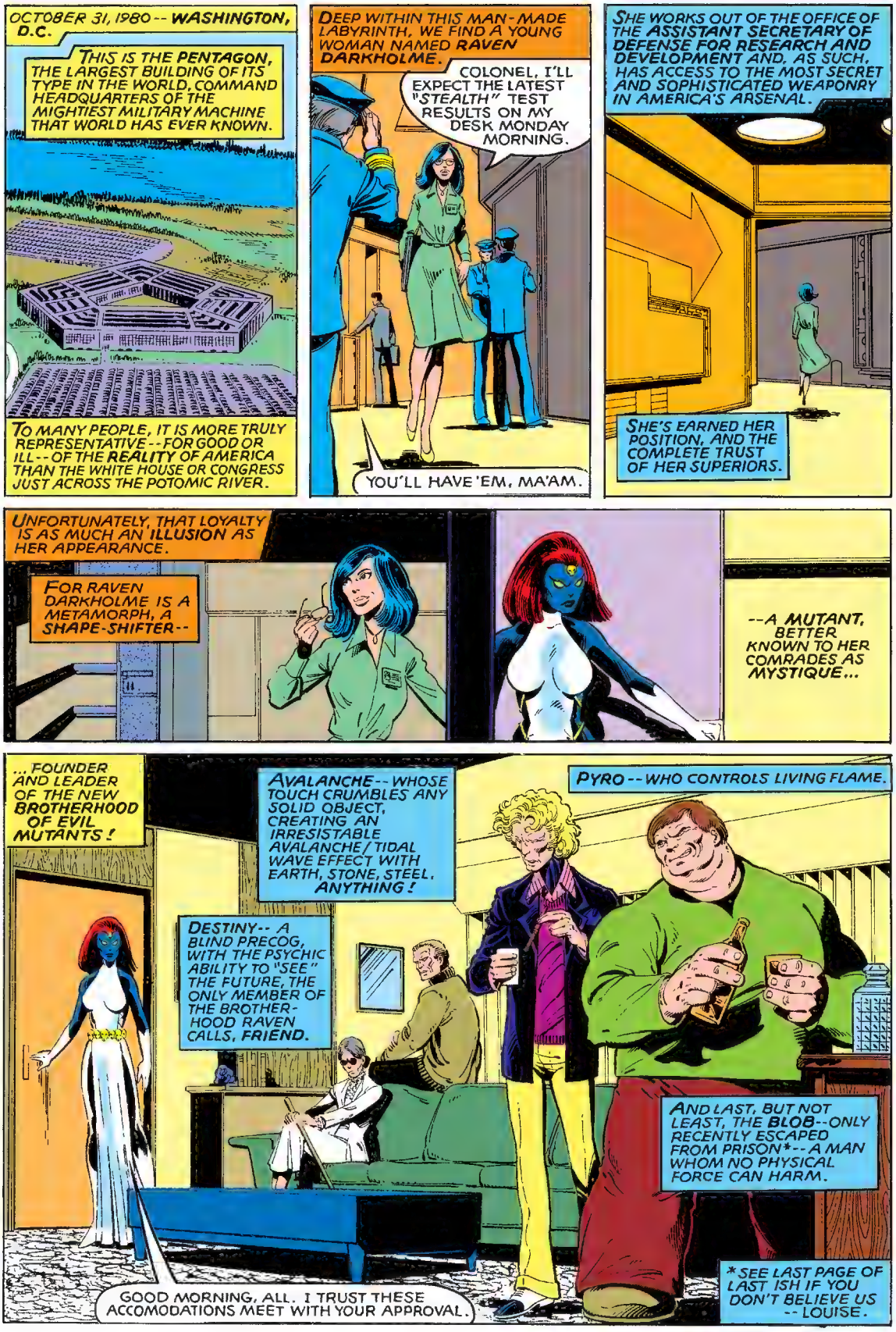

I WON'T BREAK, STORM.
THOSE BLOODY ROBOTS KILLED MY MAN. THE LEAST I CAN DO IN RETURN IS -- KILL THEM!!
WARNING! WARNING! THIS UNIT UNDER TELEKINETIC ATTACK --
SKWAURGGHH!
CENTRAL CONTROL, ALL CITY ALERT! MUTANT CONTACTS NOT WEARING INHIBITOR COLLARS. PATROL 3L-40 REQUESTING IMMEDIATE REENFORCEMENT.

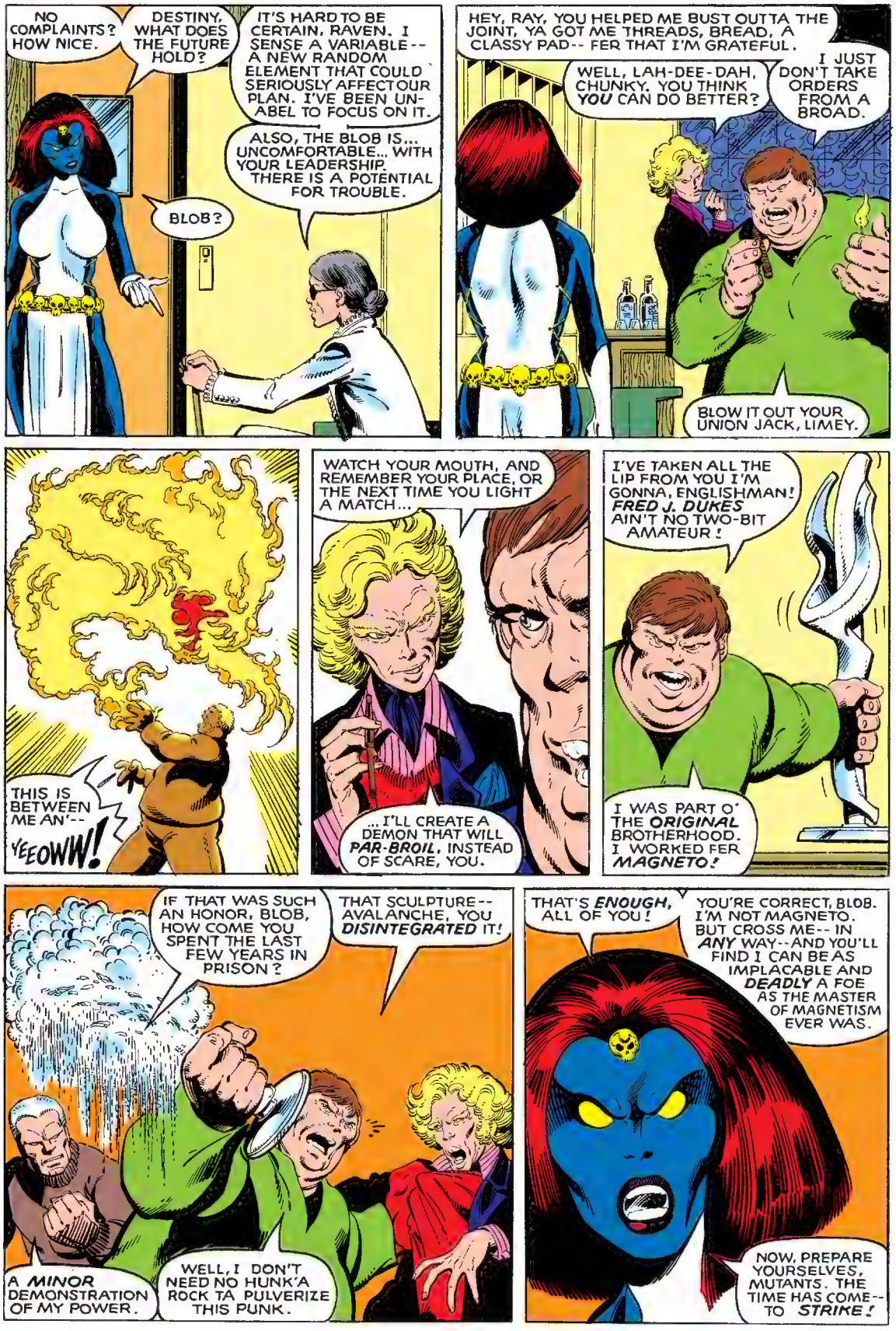
IDENTIFICATION: THIS UNIT FACING THE X-MAN, STORM.
THE FORCE OF MY LIGHTNING BOLTS IS STAGGERING THE SENTINAL, BUT I'M NOT DOING HIM ANY REAL DAMAGE. HE'S TOO WELL INSULATED.
RACHEL, GUARD KATE -- WITH YOUR LIFE!

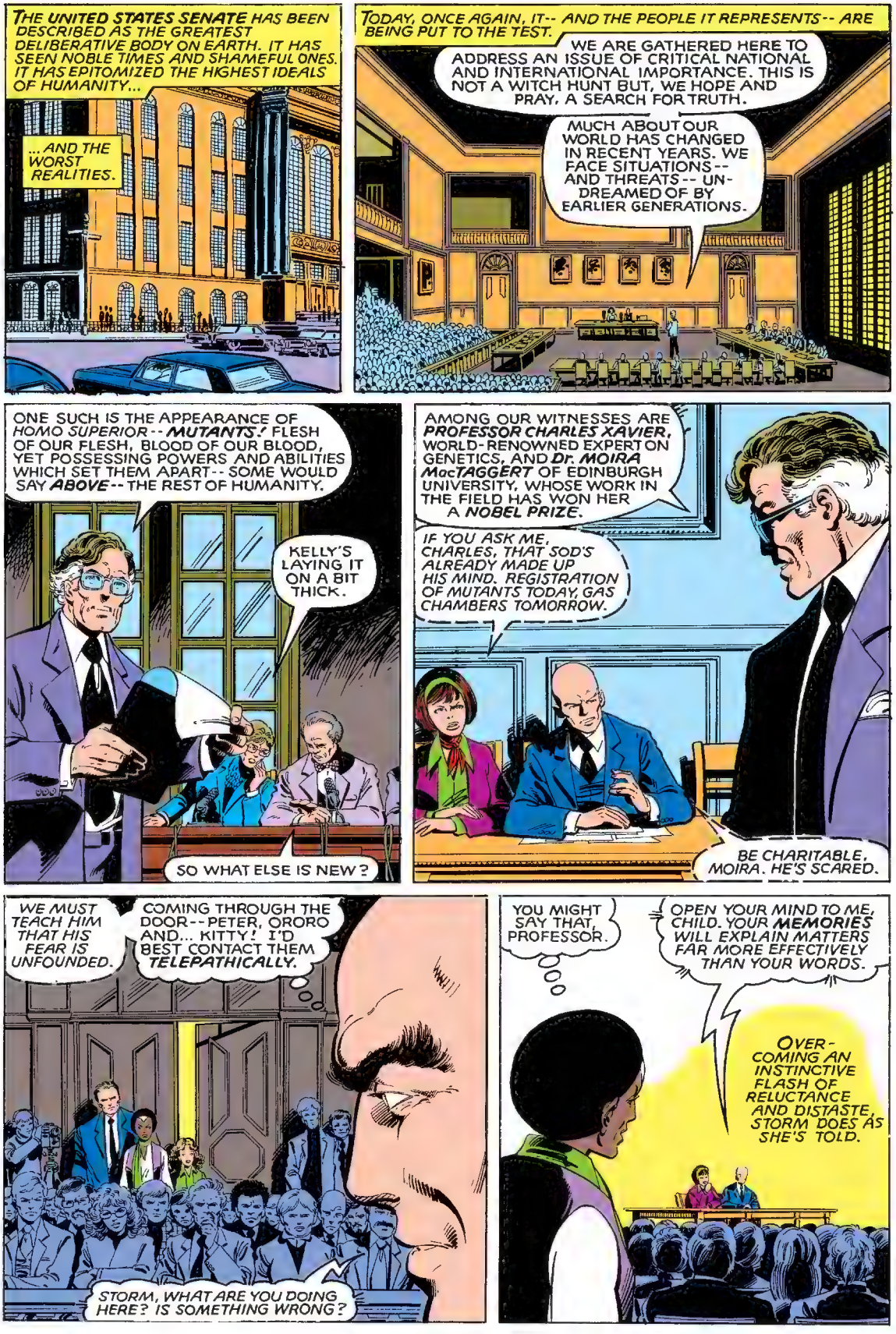

HOLA, WOLVERINE! IT'S BEEN A LONG WHILE SINCE WE'VE PRACTICED A "FAST-BALL SPECIAL," HAS IT NOT?
TOO LONG, PAL.
AS NIGHT-CRAWLER USED TO SAY: "UP, UP, AND AWAY!"
MUSCLES CLENCH, SYNAPSES CLOSE, AND GLEAMING ADAMANTIUM CLAWS POP OUT OF THE BACKS OF WOLVERINE'S HANDS. THESE RETRACTABLE CLAWS ARE FORGED OF THE STRONGEST METAL KNOWN -- ONE FAR STRONGER THAN THE SENTINAL'S OMNIUM STEEL BODIES.

LIKEWISE, HIS ENTIRE SKELETON IS LACED WITH THAT SAME MIRACLE METAL, MAKING HIS BONES VIRTUALLY UNBREAKABLE. ADD TO THAT A BERSERKER FURY THAT GIVES HIM THE FIGHTING PROWESS OF A SCORE OF HEROES...
SQUAWRRRRKK!
...AND IT'S NO WONDER THAT EVEN THESE EMOTION-LESS ROBOTS RESPECT -- AND ALMOST FEAR -- HIM.

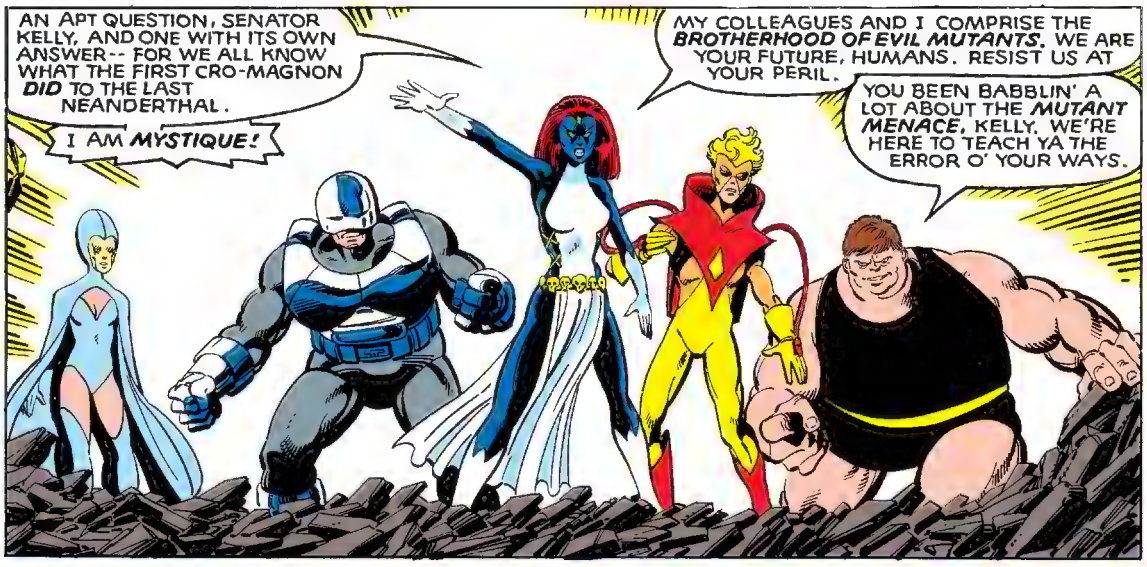

THIS UNIT CRITICALLY DAMAGED, BUT STILL FUNCTIONAL. MUTANT ASSAILANT IDENTIFIED AS WOLVERINE HAS BEEN CAPTURED. TERMINATION IMMINENT.
STORM, I'VE GIVEN YOU AN OPENING!
FINISH THIS SUCKER!
AS GOOD AS DONE, WOLVERINE.
THIS LIGHTNING BOLT SHOULD REDUCE THE SENTINEL'S COMPUTER BRAIN TO SO MUCH SLAG.
WAY TA GO, DARLIN'! COLOSSUS AN' RACHEL ZAPPED THE LAST ONE!
THREE DOWN. HOW MANY MILLION TO GO?
COMPANY IS COMING, MY FRIENDS.
ANOTHER TRIAD PATROL.
THE LONGER WE STAY IN ONE PLACE, THE MORE VULNERABLE WE BECOME. NO MATTER HOW HARD -- OR WELL -- WE FIGHT, THE SENTINELS CAN OVERWHELM US THROUGH SHEER WEIGHT OF NUMBERS.
OUR ONLY HOPE IS TO HIT AND RUN, AND NEVER LET OURSELVES BE BACKED INTO A CORNER.
ALERT! CONTACT ESTABLISHED WITH MUTANT X-MAN, COLOSSUS!
IF I HIT THE BASE OF THIS DERELICT HOTEL PRECISELY RIGHT...
... I THINK I CAN GIVE OUR WOULD-BE PURSUERS A HEADACHE THEY'LL NEVER FORGET.
THE ROBOTS' SCREAMS ARE FRIGHTENINGLY HUMAN...
... BUT COLOSSUS DOES NOT CARE.
HE WAS THE GENTLEST OF SOULS, UNTIL THE SENTINELS SLEW HIS FRIENDS, AND HIS CHILDREN -- AND THEREBY TAUGHT HIM HOW TO HATE.
WE MUST PUSH ON. THE BAXTER BUILDING IS THE SENTINELS' CONTINENTAL NERVE CENTER. DESTROY IT AND WE CAN CRIPPLE THEM.
I WISH KATE LUCK, WHEREVER SHE IS. I DO NOT KNOW WHO WILL NEED IT MORE...
... HER -- OR US.

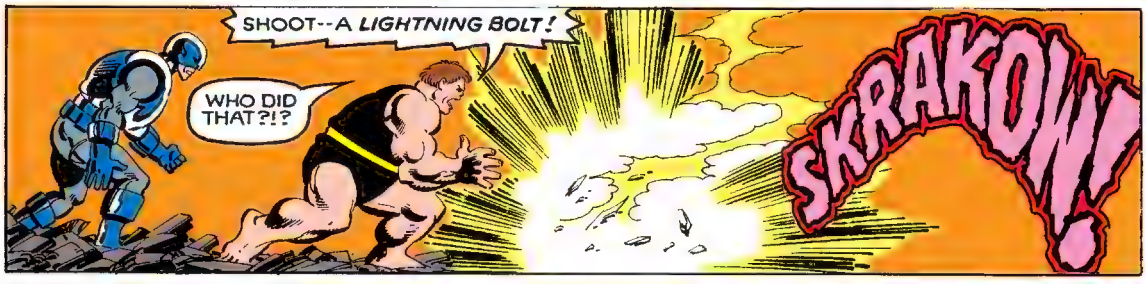

OCTOBER 31, 1980 -- WASHINGTON, D.C.
THIS IS THE PENTAGON, THE LARGEST BUILDING OF ITS TYPE IN THE WORLD, COMMAND HEADQUARTERS OF THE MIGHTIEST MILITARY MACHINE THAT WORLD HAS EVER KNOWN.
TO MANY PEOPLE, IT IS MORE TRULY REPRESENTATIVE -- FOR GOOD OR ILL -- OF THE REALITY OF AMERICA THAN THE WHITE HOUSE OR CONGRESS JUST ACROSS THE POTOMIC RIVER.
DEEP WITHIN THIS MAN-MADE LABYRINTH, WE FIND A YOUNG WOMAN NAMED RAVEN DARKHOLME.
COLONEL, I'LL EXPECT THE LATEST "STEALTH" TEST RESULTS ON MY DESK MONDAY MORNING.
YOU'LL HAVE 'EM, MA'AM.
SHE WORKS OUT OF THE OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT AND, AS SUCH, HAS ACCESS TO THE MOST SECRET AND SOPHISTICATED WEAPONRY IN AMERICA'S ARSENAL.
SHE'S EARNED HER POSITION, AND THE COMPLETE TRUST OF HER SUPERIORS.
UNFORTUNATELY, THAT LOYALTY IS AS MUCH AN ILLUSION AS HER APPEARANCE.
FOR RAVEN DARKHOLME IS A METAMORPH, A SHAPE-SHIFTER--
--A MUTANT, BETTER KNOWN TO HER COMRADES AS MYSTIQUE...
... FOUNDER AND LEADER OF THE NEW BROTHERHOOD OF EVIL MUTANTS!
AVALANCHE -- WHOSE TOUCH CRUMBLES ANY SOLID OBJECT, CREATING AN IRRESISTABLE AVALANCHE/TIDAL WAVE EFFECT WITH EARTH, STONE, STEEL, ANYTHING!
PYRO -- WHO CONTROLS LIVING FLAME.
DESTINY -- A BLIND PRECOG, WITH THE PSYCHIC ABILITY TO "SEE" THE FUTURE, THE ONLY MEMBER OF THE BROTHERHOOD RAVEN CALLS, FRIEND.
AND LAST, BUT NOT LEAST, THE BLOB -- ONLY RECENTLY ESCAPED FROM PRISON* -- A MAN WHOM NO PHYSICAL FORCE CAN HARM.
GOOD MORNING, ALL. I TRUST THESE ACCOMODATIONS MEET WITH YOUR APPROVAL.
*SEE LAST PAGE OF LAST ISH IF YOU DON'T BELIEVE US -- LOUISE.

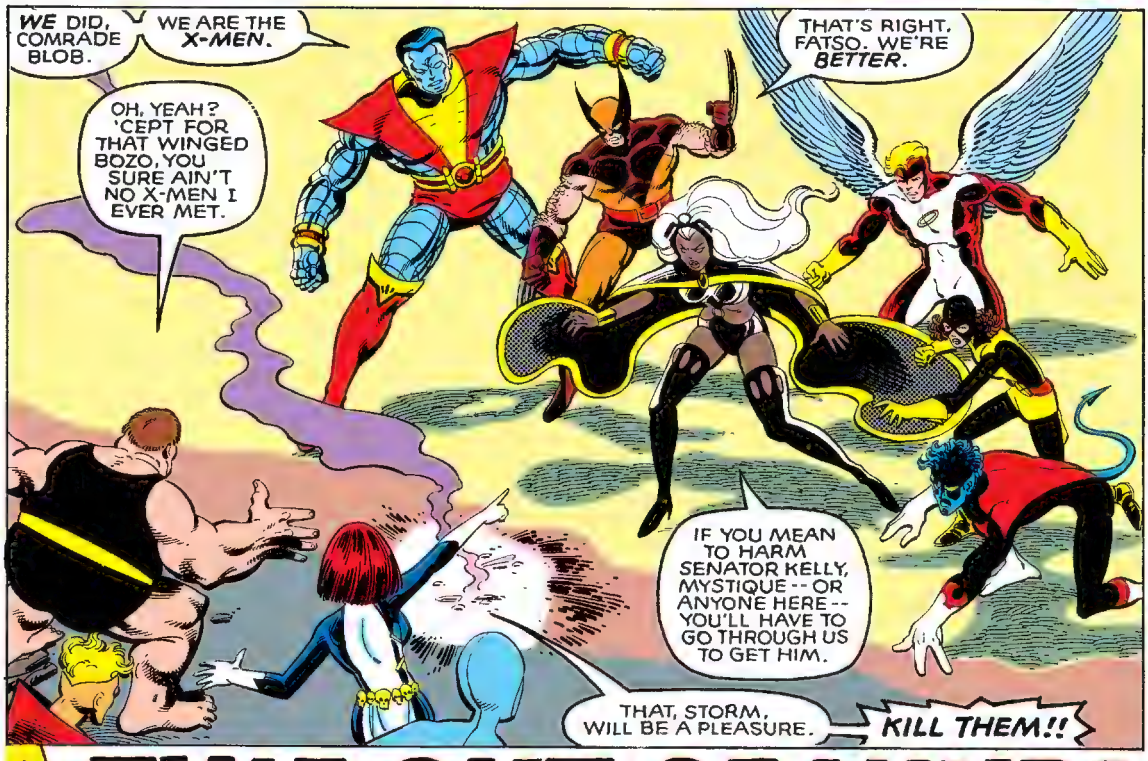

NO COMPLAINTS? HOW NICE.
DESTINY, WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD?
IT'S HARD TO BE CERTAIN, RAVEN. I SENSE A VARIABLE-- A NEW RANDOM ELEMENT THAT COULD SERIOUSLY AFFECT OUR PLAN. I'VE BEEN UNABEL TO FOCUS ON IT.
ALSO, THE BLOB IS... UNCOMFORTABLE... WITH YOUR LEADERSHIP. THERE IS A POTENTIAL FOR TROUBLE.
BLOB?
HEY, RAY, YOU HELPED ME BUST OUTTA THE JOINT, YA GOT ME THREADS, BREAD, A CLASSY PAD-- FER THAT I'M GRATEFUL.
WELL, LAH-DEE-DAH, CHUNKY. YOU THINK *YOU* CAN DO BETTER?
I JUST DON'T TAKE ORDERS FROM A BROAD.
BLOW IT OUT YOUR UNION JACK, LIMEY.
THIS IS BETWEEN ME AN'--
YEEOWW!
WATCH YOUR MOUTH, AND REMEMBER YOUR PLACE, OR THE NEXT TIME YOU LIGHT A MATCH...
... I'LL CREATE A DEMON THAT WILL *PAR-BROIL*, INSTEAD OF SCARE, YOU.
I'VE TAKEN ALL THE LIP FROM YOU I'M GONNA, ENGLISHMAN! *FRED J. DUKES* AIN'T NO TWO-BIT AMATEUR!
I WAS PART O' THE *ORIGINAL* BROTHERHOOD. I WORKED FER *MAGNETO!*
IF THAT WAS SUCH AN HONOR, BLOB, HOW COME YOU SPENT THE LAST FEW YEARS IN PRISON?
THAT SCULPTURE-- AVALANCHE, YOU *DISINTEGRATED* IT!
A *MINOR* DEMONSTRATION OF MY POWER.
WELL, I DON'T NEED NO HUNK'A ROCK TA PULVERIZE THIS PUNK.
THAT'S *ENOUGH*, ALL OF YOU!
YOU'RE CORRECT, BLOB. I'M NOT MAGNETO. BUT CROSS ME-- IN *ANY* WAY--AND YOU'LL FIND I CAN BE AS IMPLACABLE AND *DEADLY* A FOE AS THE MASTER OF MAGNETISM EVER WAS.
NOW, PREPARE YOURSELVES, MUTANTS. THE TIME HAS COME-- TO *STRIKE!*


THE UNITED STATES SENATE HAS BEEN DESCRIBED AS THE GREATEST DELIBERATIVE BODY ON EARTH. IT HAS SEEN NOBLE TIMES AND SHAMEFUL ONES. IT HAS EPITOMIZED THE HIGHEST IDEALS OF HUMANITY...
...AND THE WORST REALITIES.
TODAY, ONCE AGAIN, IT-- AND THE PEOPLE IT REPRESENTS-- ARE BEING PUT TO THE TEST.
WE ARE GATHERED HERE TO ADDRESS AN ISSUE OF CRITICAL NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE. THIS IS NOT A WITCH HUNT BUT, WE HOPE AND PRAY, A SEARCH FOR TRUTH.
MUCH ABOUT OUR WORLD HAS CHANGED IN RECENT YEARS. WE FACE SITUATIONS-- AND THREATS-- UNDREAMED OF BY EARLIER GENERATIONS.
ONE SUCH IS THE APPEARANCE OF HOMO SUPERIOR-- MUTANTS! FLESH OF OUR FLESH, BLOOD OF OUR BLOOD, YET POSSESSING POWERS AND ABILITIES WHICH SET THEM APART-- SOME WOULD SAY ABOVE-- THE REST OF HUMANITY.
KELLY'S LAYING IT ON A BIT THICK.
SO WHAT ELSE IS NEW?
AMONG OUR WITNESSES ARE PROFESSOR CHARLES XAVIER, WORLD-RENOWNED EXPERT ON GENETICS, AND Dr. MOIRA MacTAGGERT OF EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY, WHOSE WORK IN THE FIELD HAS WON HER A NOBEL PRIZE.
IF YOU ASK ME, CHARLES, THAT SOD'S ALREADY MADE UP HIS MIND. REGISTRATION OF MUTANTS TODAY, GAS CHAMBERS TOMORROW.
BE CHARITABLE, MOIRA. HE'S SCARED.
WE MUST TEACH HIM THAT HIS FEAR IS UNFOUNDED.
COMING THROUGH THE DOOR-- PETER, ORORO AND... KITTY! I'D BEST CONTACT THEM TELEPATHICALLY.
STORM, WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? IS SOMETHING WRONG?
YOU MIGHT SAY THAT, PROFESSOR.
OPEN YOUR MIND TO ME, CHILD. YOUR MEMORIES WILL EXPLAIN MATTERS FAR MORE EFFECTIVELY THAN YOUR WORDS.
OVERCOMING AN INSTINCTIVE FLASH OF RELUCTANCE AND DISTASTE, STORM DOES AS SHE'S TOLD.

AFTER MIND-SCANNING STORM, XAVIER TURNS TO KITTY-- AND WHAT HE "SEES" IN HER BRAIN MAKES HIM PALE. MEANWHILE...
OHO! THIS HEARING'S GETTING INTERESTING. THAT'S WARREN WORTHINGTON. HE'S A MUTIE. HIS HANDLE'S THE ANGEL. HE USED TO BANKROLL A WEST COAST SUPER-GROUP CALLED THE CHAMPIONS.
TELL LOIS TO TRY FOR AN INTERVIEW.
SENATOR, IN ALL HONESTY, I FAIL TO SEE THE NEED FOR THIS HEARING, OR YOUR CONCERN.
THE NEED IS SIMPLE, Dr. MacTAGGERT. I MERELY WONDER IF-- IN A WORLD OF BEINGS LIKE Dr. DOOM, MAGNETO, THE FANTASTIC FOUR, THE AVENGERS, AND LORD KNOWS HOW MANY OTHERS--
--THERE'S ANY PLACE FOR ORDINARY MEN AND WOMEN.
I WONDER, AS WELL, DOCTOR, IF THIS SAME QUESTION WASN'T ASKED BY THE LAST NEANDERTHAL ABOUT THE FIRST CRO-MAGNON?
HOLEE--!
GET OUTTA HERE, YOU PEOPLE! RUN FOR IT!!
THAT WALL'S COMIN' DOWN!!
HELP!
YYIIII--!
AND, WHEN THE AVALANCHE HAS RUN ITS COURSE...


AN APT QUESTION, SENATOR KELLY, AND ONE WITH ITS OWN ANSWER-- FOR WE ALL KNOW WHAT THE FIRST CRO-MAGNON *DID* TO THE LAST NEANDERTHAL.
I AM *MYSTIQUE!*
MY COLLEAGUES AND I COMPRISE THE *BROTHERHOOD OF EVIL MUTANTS*. WE ARE YOUR FUTURE, HUMANS. RESIST US AT YOUR PERIL.
YOU BEEN BABBLIN' A LOT ABOUT THE *MUTANT MENACE*, KELLY. WE'RE HERE TO TEACH YA THE ERROR O' YOUR WAYS.




WE DID, COMRADE BLOB.
WE ARE THE *X-MEN*.
OH, YEAH? 'CEPT FOR THAT WINGED BOZO, YOU SURE AIN'T NO X-MEN I EVER MET.
THAT'S RIGHT, FATSO. WE'RE *BETTER*.
IF YOU MEAN TO HARM SENATOR KELLY, MYSTIQUE -- OR ANYONE HERE -- YOU'LL HAVE TO GO THROUGH US TO GET HIM.
THAT, STORM, WILL BE A PLEASURE.
KILL THEM!!

NEXT **TIME OUT OF MIND!**

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STAN LEE presents: THE UNCANNY X-MEN!

CHRIS CLAREMONT · JOHN BYRNE WRITER / CO-PLOTTERS / PENCILER | TERRY AUSTIN INKER | GLYNIS WEIN, colorist TOM ORZECHOWSKI, letterer | LOUISE JONES EDITOR | JIM SHOOTER Ed.-IN-CHIEF

THIS IS A TALE OF TWO WORLDS -- AND OF THE CHILD/WOMAN WHO SOUGHT TO SAVE THEM.
MIND OUT OF TIME!
1980-- THE UNCANNY X-MEN (WOLVERINE, COLOSSUS, STORM, ANGEL, SPRITE & NIGHTCRAWLER) FACE OFF AGAINST THE NEWLY-RECONSTITUTED BROTHERHOOD OF EVIL MUTANTS IN A HEARING ROOM OF THE UNITED STATES SENATE.
2013-- THE REMNANTS OF THAT SELF-SAME TEAM OF MUTANT SUPER-HEROES FIGHT FOR THEIR LIVES AGAINST THE NIGH-IRRESISTIBLE MIGHT OF THE SENTINELS...
...IN A LAST-DITCH ATTEMPT TO SAVE THEIR WORLD FROM IMMINENT NUCLEAR ARMAGEDDON.
AND LINKING THESE TWO WORLDS, THESE TWO DESPERATE BATTLES, IS KATHERINE PRYDE. IN HER HANDS LIES THE FATE OF MUTANTKIND, OF HUMANITY, OF THE EARTH ITSELF. FAILURE IS UNTHINKABLE, YET SUCCESS MAY WELL BE IMPOSSIBLE -- FOR SHE SEEKS TO CHANGE HISTORY.

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OF THE ORIGINAL BROTHERHOOD, ONLY THE BLOB REMAINS, JOINED NOW BY THE BLIND PRECOG, **DESTINY**, WHO CAN SEE THE FUTURE.

PYRO-- MASTER OF THE LIVING FLAME.

AVALANCHE-- WHOSE TOUCH DISINTEGRATES INANIMATE OBJECTS.

AND THE GROUP'S LEADER, THE MYSTERIOUS SHAPE-CHANGER CALLED **MYSTIQUE**.

SENATOR KELLY IS FOND OF SPEAKING AGAINST THE MUTANT MENACE. MY COLLEAGUES AND I ARE THAT MENACE INCARNATE! AS AN EXAMPLE OF OUR DREAD POWER-- AS AN OBJECT LESSON TO THOSE WHO WOULD OPPOSE US-- WE INTEND TO **KILL HIM**.

STAND ASIDE, X-MEN. OR SUFFER THE CONSEQUENCES.

YOU WANT KELLY, MYSTIQUE, YOU'LL HAVE TO GO THROUGH US TO GET HIM!

THIS IS MONSTROUS! HOW **DARE** YOU FREAKS TURN THE UNITED STATES SENATE INTO A BATTLE-FIELD?!

HOW DARE YOU THREATEN ME! MARSHALS, **ARREST** THOSE... PEOPLE!

KELLY, YOU'RE EITHER THE BRAVEST MAN I EVER SEEN, OR THE DUMBEST. EITHER WAY, YOU'RE GONNA **DIE** TODAY!

THAT'S ENOUGH OUTTA YOU, FATSO. YOU AN' YOUR MUTIE PLAYMATES HAVE GONE TOO FAR THIS TIME, AN' YOU'RE GONNA PAY FOR IT!

COME ALONG QUIETLY-- ALL OF YOU-- OR ELSE!

WHOOO-EE! YOU GOT ME SHAKIN' IN MY BOOTS, COP!

CHUMP, YOU'RE TALKIN' TA THE **BLOB**!

YUNNNGH!

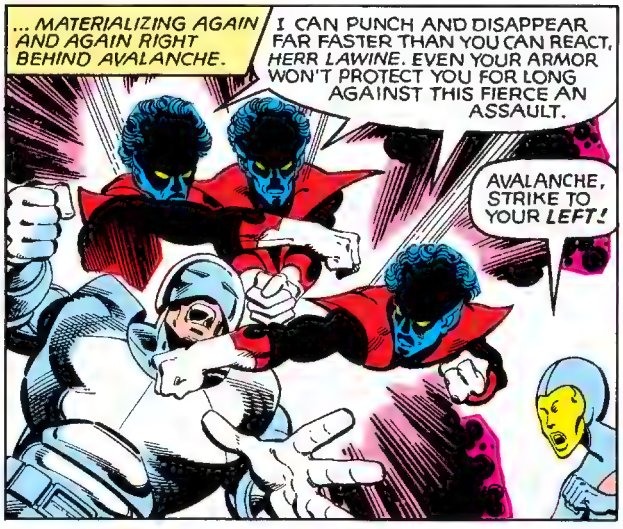
NO POWER ON EARTH CAN MOVE ME IF I DON'T WANNA BE MOVED, AN' NO FORCE ON EARTH CAN HARM ME!

YOU'RE A REAL TERROR AGAINST ORDINARY PEOPLE, BLOB. LET'S HOPE THE X-MEN PROVE AS **EASY** TO DEAL WITH.

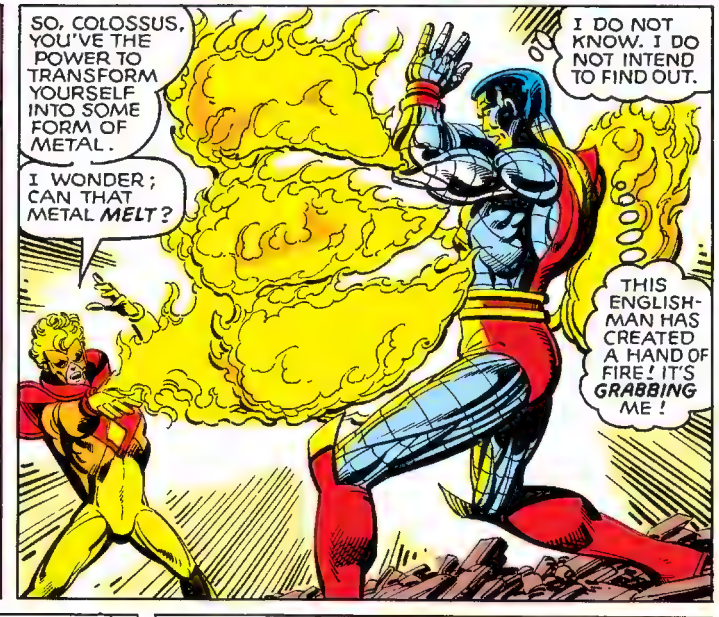
BEAMS OF FORCE HAMMER OUT FROM AVALANCHE'S HANDS...

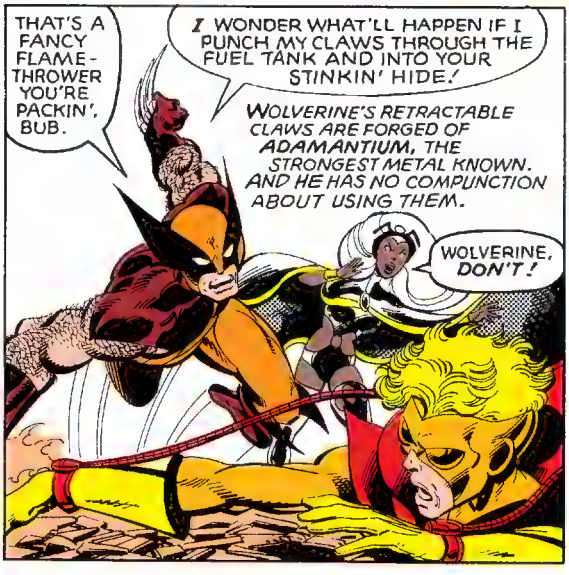
...GIVING THE MARBLE FLOOR A LIQUID FLUIDITY AND SENDING IT FLOWING TOWARDS THE FAR END OF THE ROOM LIKE A **TIDAL WAVE**.

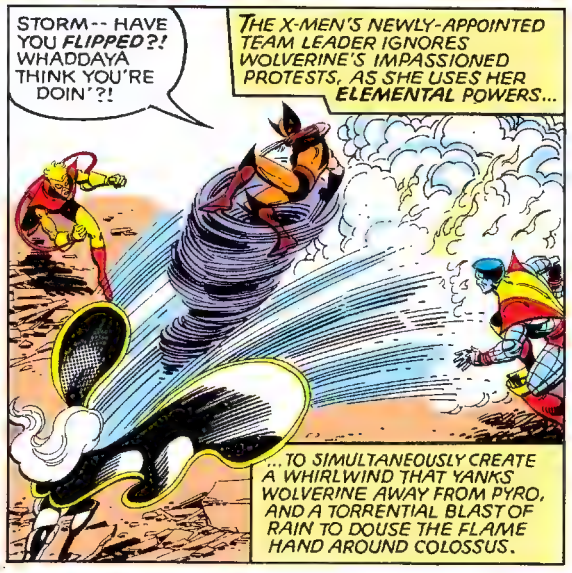
NIGHTCRAWLER REACTS FIRST, USING ACROBATIC SKILLS HONED BY A LIFETIME IN THE CIRCUS TO KEEP HIS BALANCE ON THE SWIFTLY TILTING FLOOR.
THEN, HE ATTACKS-- IN A STYLE UNIQUELY HIS OWN.
BAMF
HE TELEPORTS...

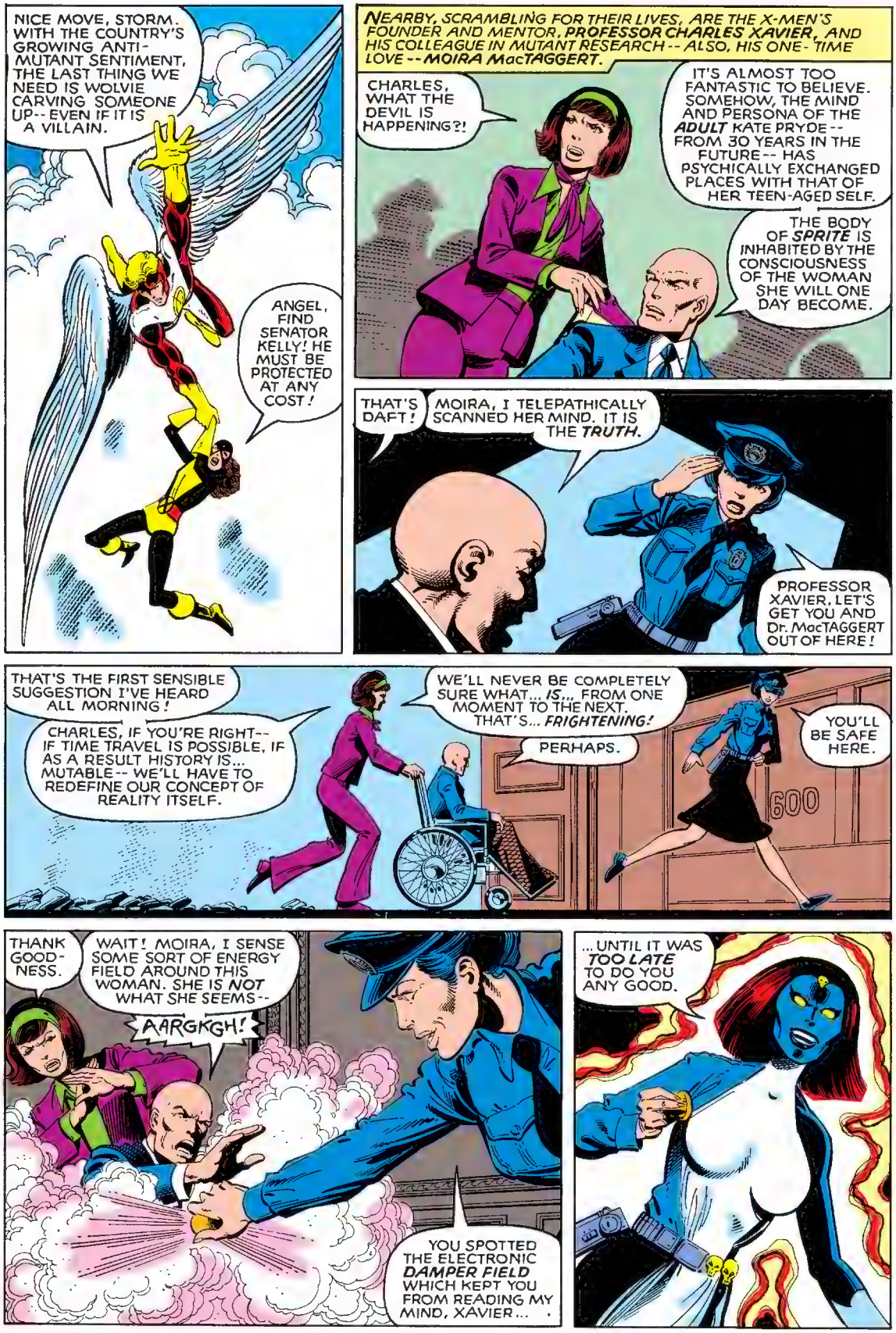

... MATERIALIZING AGAIN AND AGAIN RIGHT BEHIND AVALANCHE.
I CAN PUNCH AND DISAPPEAR FAR FASTER THAN YOU CAN REACT, HERR LAWINE. EVEN YOUR ARMOR WON'T PROTECT YOU FOR LONG AGAINST THIS FIERCE AN ASSAULT.
AVALANCHE, STRIKE TO YOUR LEFT!

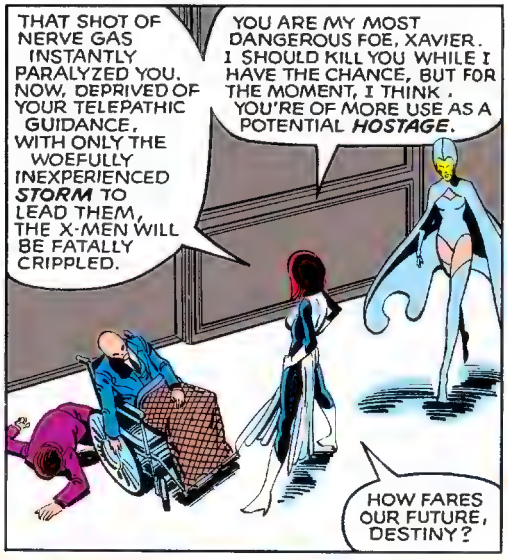
THAT IS WHERE NIGHTCRAWLER WILL REAPPEAR!
WHOULFF!!

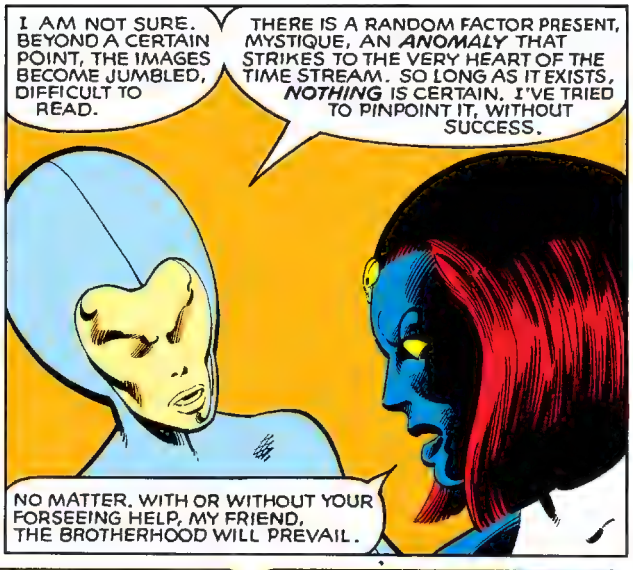

SO, COLOSSUS, YOU'VE THE POWER TO TRANSFORM YOURSELF INTO SOME FORM OF METAL.
I WONDER; CAN THAT METAL MELT?
I DO NOT KNOW. I DO NOT INTEND TO FIND OUT.
THIS ENGLISH-MAN HAS CREATED A HAND OF FIRE! IT'S GRABBING ME!


THAT'S A FANCY FLAME-THROWER YOU'RE PACKIN', BUB.
I WONDER WHAT'LL HAPPEN IF I PUNCH MY CLAWS THROUGH THE FUEL TANK AND INTO YOUR STINKIN' HIDE!
WOLVERINE'S RETRACTABLE CLAWS ARE FORGED OF ADAMANTIUM, THE STRONGEST METAL KNOWN. AND HE HAS NO COMPUNCTION ABOUT USING THEM.
WOLVERINE, DON'T!


STORM-- HAVE YOU FLIPPED?! WHADDAYA THINK YOU'RE DOIN'?!
THE X-MEN'S NEWLY-APPOINTED TEAM LEADER IGNORES WOLVERINE'S IMPASSIONED PROTESTS, AS SHE USES HER ELEMENTAL POWERS...
...TO SIMULTANEOUSLY CREATE A WHIRLWIND THAT YANKS WOLVERINE AWAY FROM PYRO, AND A TORRENTIAL BLAST OF RAIN TO DOUSE THE FLAME HAND AROUND COLOSSUS.

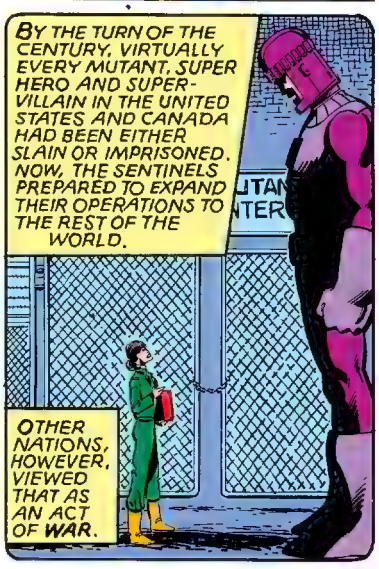

NICE MOVE, STORM. WITH THE COUNTRY'S GROWING ANTI-MUTANT SENTIMENT, THE LAST THING WE NEED IS WOLVIE CARVING SOMEONE UP-- EVEN IF IT IS A VILLAIN.
ANGEL, FIND SENATOR KELLY! HE MUST BE PROTECTED AT ANY COST!
NEARBY, SCRAMBLING FOR THEIR LIVES, ARE THE X-MEN'S FOUNDER AND MENTOR, PROFESSOR CHARLES XAVIER, AND HIS COLLEAGUE IN MUTANT RESEARCH -- ALSO, HIS ONE-TIME LOVE -- MOIRA MacTAGGERT.
CHARLES, WHAT THE DEVIL IS HAPPENING?!
IT'S ALMOST TOO FANTASTIC TO BELIEVE. SOMEHOW, THE MIND AND PERSONA OF THE ADULT KATE PRYDE -- FROM 30 YEARS IN THE FUTURE -- HAS PSYCHICALLY EXCHANGED PLACES WITH THAT OF HER TEEN-AGED SELF.
THE BODY OF SPRITE IS INHABITED BY THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE WOMAN SHE WILL ONE DAY BECOME.
THAT'S DAFT!
MOIRA, I TELEPATHICALLY SCANNED HER MIND. IT IS THE TRUTH.
PROFESSOR XAVIER, LET'S GET YOU AND Dr. MacTAGGERT OUT OF HERE!
THAT'S THE FIRST SENSIBLE SUGGESTION I'VE HEARD ALL MORNING!
CHARLES, IF YOU'RE RIGHT-- IF TIME TRAVEL IS POSSIBLE, IF AS A RESULT HISTORY IS... MUTABLE -- WE'LL HAVE TO REDEFINE OUR CONCEPT OF REALITY ITSELF.
WE'LL NEVER BE COMPLETELY SURE WHAT... IS... FROM ONE MOMENT TO THE NEXT. THAT'S... FRIGHTENING!
PERHAPS.
YOU'LL BE SAFE HERE.
600
THANK GOOD-NESS.
WAIT! MOIRA, I SENSE SOME SORT OF ENERGY FIELD AROUND THIS WOMAN. SHE IS NOT WHAT SHE SEEMS--
AARGKGH!
YOU SPOTTED THE ELECTRONIC DAMPER FIELD WHICH KEPT YOU FROM READING MY MIND, XAVIER...
...UNTIL IT WAS TOO LATE TO DO YOU ANY GOOD.


THAT SHOT OF NERVE GAS INSTANTLY PARALYZED YOU. NOW, DEPRIVED OF YOUR TELEPATHIC GUIDANCE, WITH ONLY THE WOEFULLY INEXPERIENCED STORM TO LEAD THEM, THE X-MEN WILL BE FATALLY CRIPPLED.
YOU ARE MY MOST DANGEROUS FOE, XAVIER. I SHOULD KILL YOU WHILE I HAVE THE CHANCE, BUT FOR THE MOMENT, I THINK YOU'RE OF MORE USE AS A POTENTIAL HOSTAGE.
HOW FARES OUR FUTURE, DESTINY?

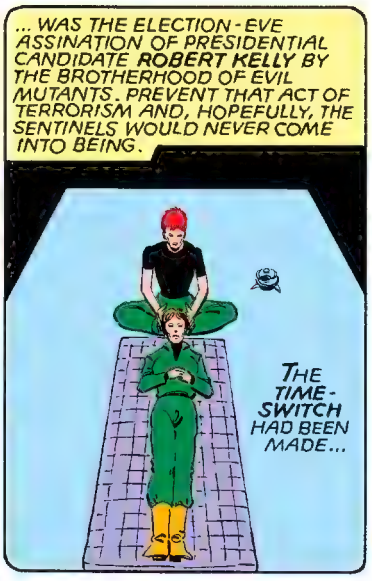

I AM NOT SURE. BEYOND A CERTAIN POINT, THE IMAGES BECOME JUMBLED, DIFFICULT TO READ.
THERE IS A RANDOM FACTOR PRESENT, MYSTIQUE, AN ANOMALY THAT STRIKES TO THE VERY HEART OF THE TIME STREAM. SO LONG AS IT EXISTS, NOTHING IS CERTAIN. I'VE TRIED TO PINPOINT IT, WITHOUT SUCCESS.
NO MATTER. WITH OR WITHOUT YOUR FORSEEING HELP, MY FRIEND, THE BROTHERHOOD WILL PREVAIL.

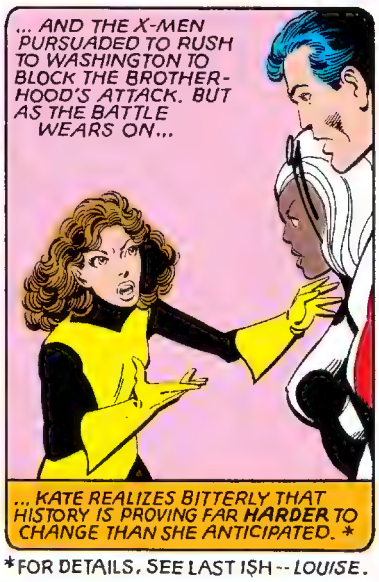
AND, SPEAKING OF DESTINY'S TEMPORAL "ANOMALY"...
SOMETHING'S GONE TERRIBLY WRONG! MY PRESENCE HERE HASN'T CHANGED A BLESSED THING! HAVE I ENDURED-- AND GAMBLED -- SO MUCH...
...ONLY TO FAIL?!?

KATE PRYDE'S THOUGHTS TWIST FORWARD ACROSS THE DECADES TO HER HOME -- A NORTH AMERICA RULED BY SENTINELS (GIANT, SUPER-SOPHISTICATED ROBOTS PROGRAMMED TO STAMP OUT MUTANT-KIND).

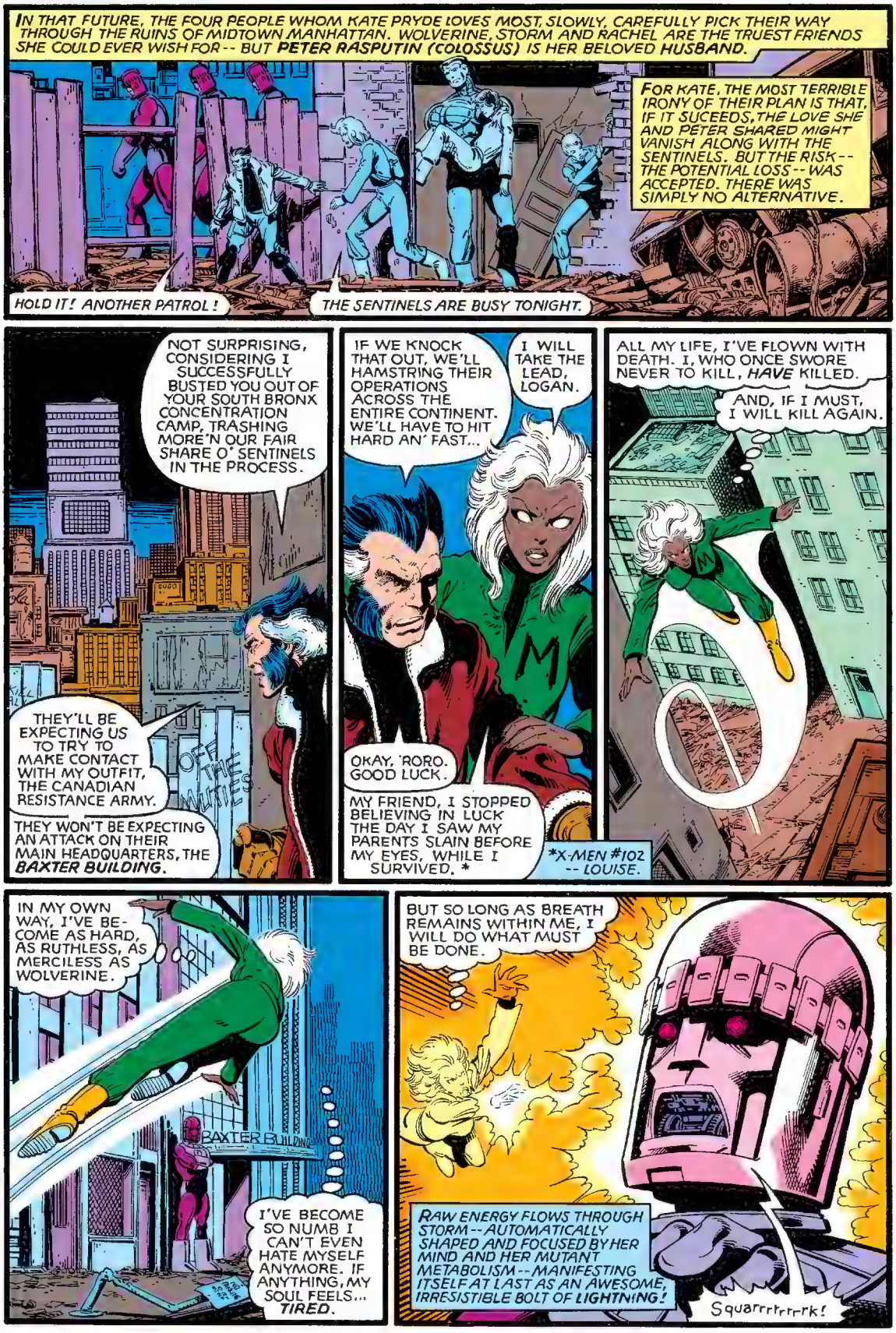

BY THE TURN OF THE CENTURY, VIRTUALLY EVERY MUTANT, SUPER HERO AND SUPER-VILLAIN IN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA HAD BEEN EITHER SLAIN OR IMPRISONED. NOW, THE SENTINELS PREPARED TO EXPAND THEIR OPERATIONS TO THE REST OF THE WORLD.
OTHER NATIONS, HOWEVER, VIEWED THAT AS AN ACT OF WAR.

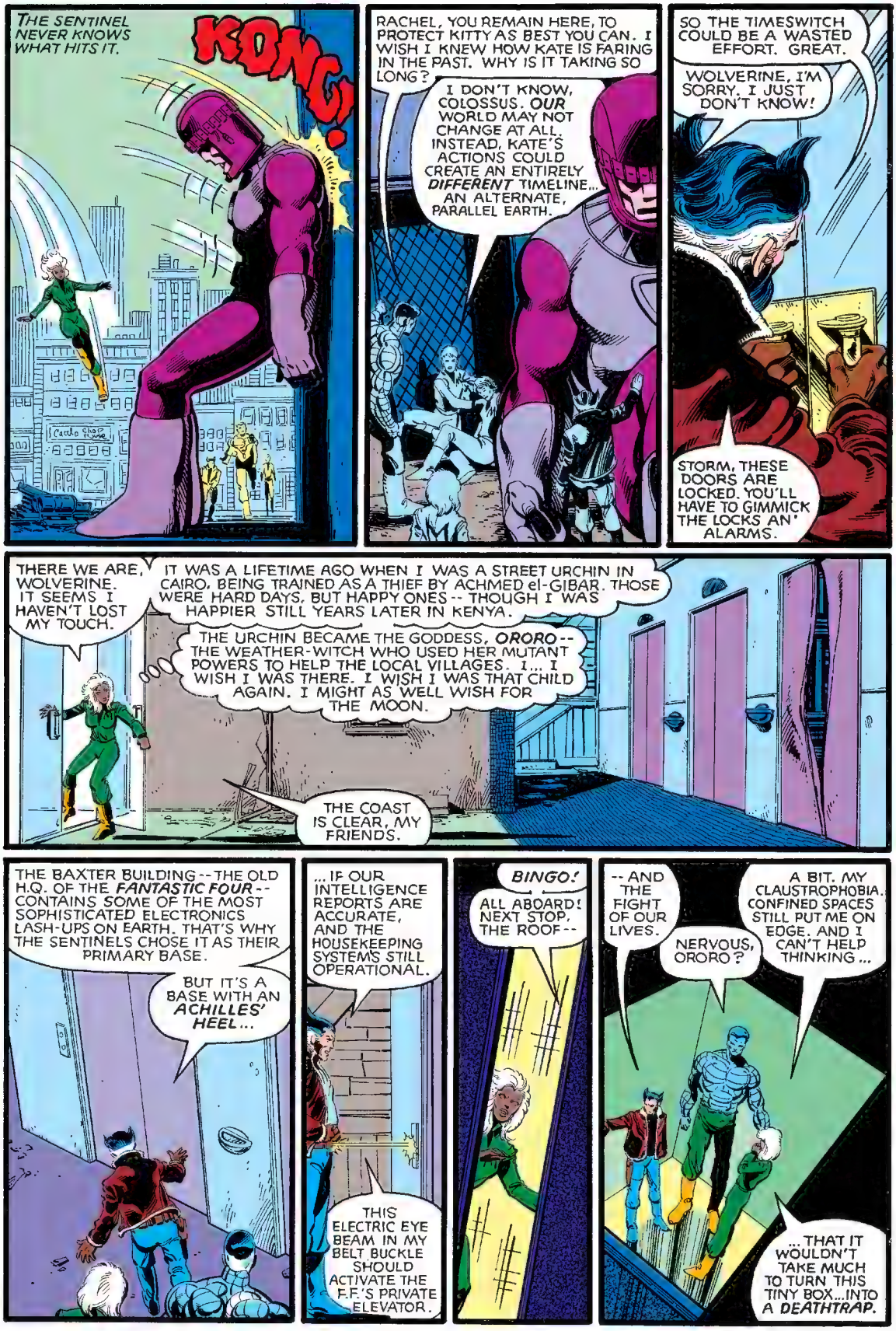
TO HEAD OFF THAT WORLD-DESTROYING CONFRONTATION, THE FEW SURVIVING X-MEN -- JOINED NOW BY MAGNETO -- HATCHED A DESPERATE PLAN. THE SEMINAL EVENT THAT LED TO THE SENTINELS' RE-CREATION...


... WAS THE ELECTION-EVE ASSINATION OF PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE ROBERT KELLY BY THE BROTHERHOOD OF EVIL MUTANTS. PREVENT THAT ACT OF TERRORISM AND, HOPEFULLY, THE SENTINELS WOULD NEVER COME INTO BEING.
THE TIME-SWITCH HAD BEEN MADE...

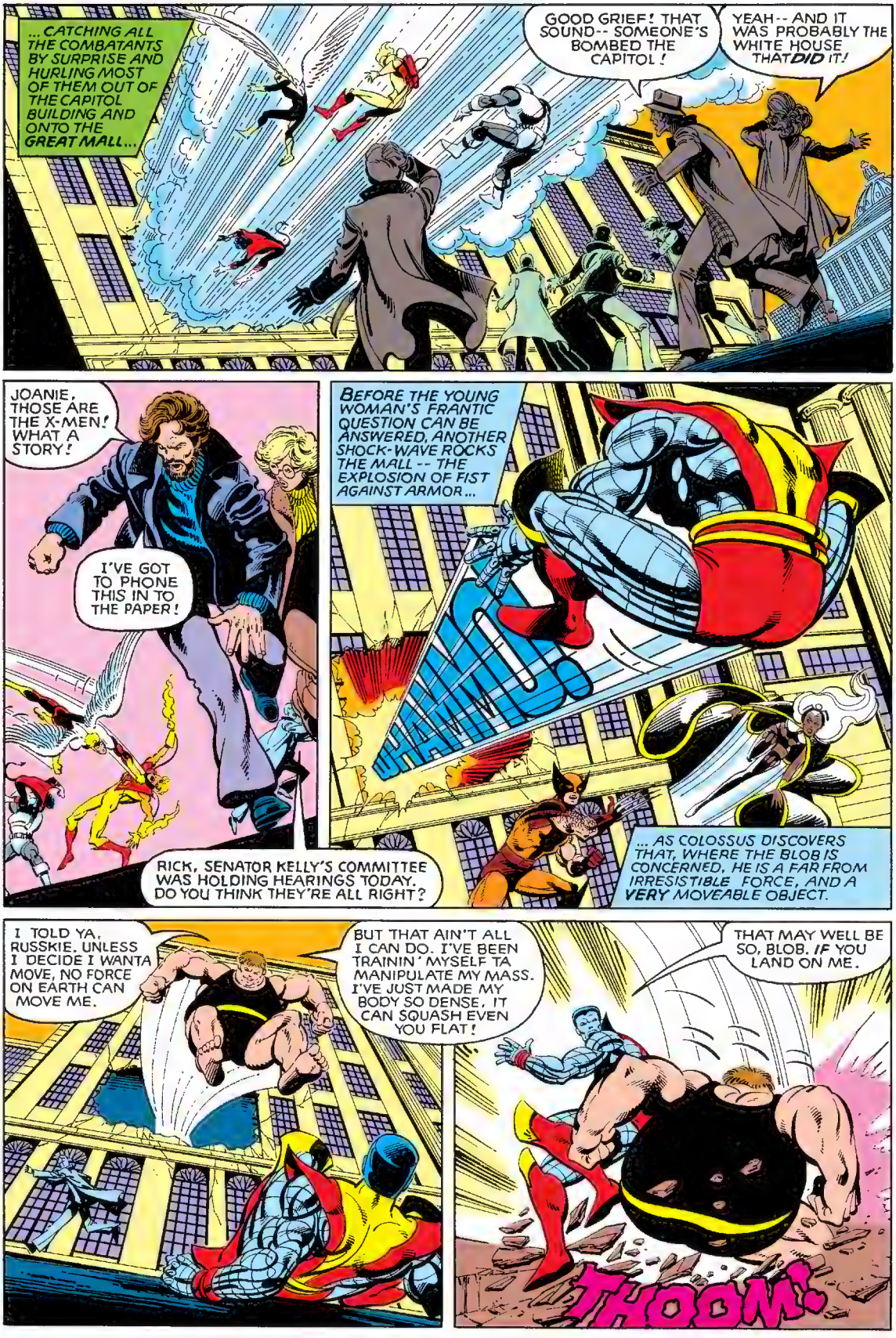

... AND THE X-MEN PURSUADED TO RUSH TO WASHINGTON TO BLOCK THE BROTHERHOOD'S ATTACK. BUT AS THE BATTLE WEARS ON...
... KATE REALIZES BITTERLY THAT HISTORY IS PROVING FAR HARDER TO CHANGE THAN SHE ANTICIPATED. *

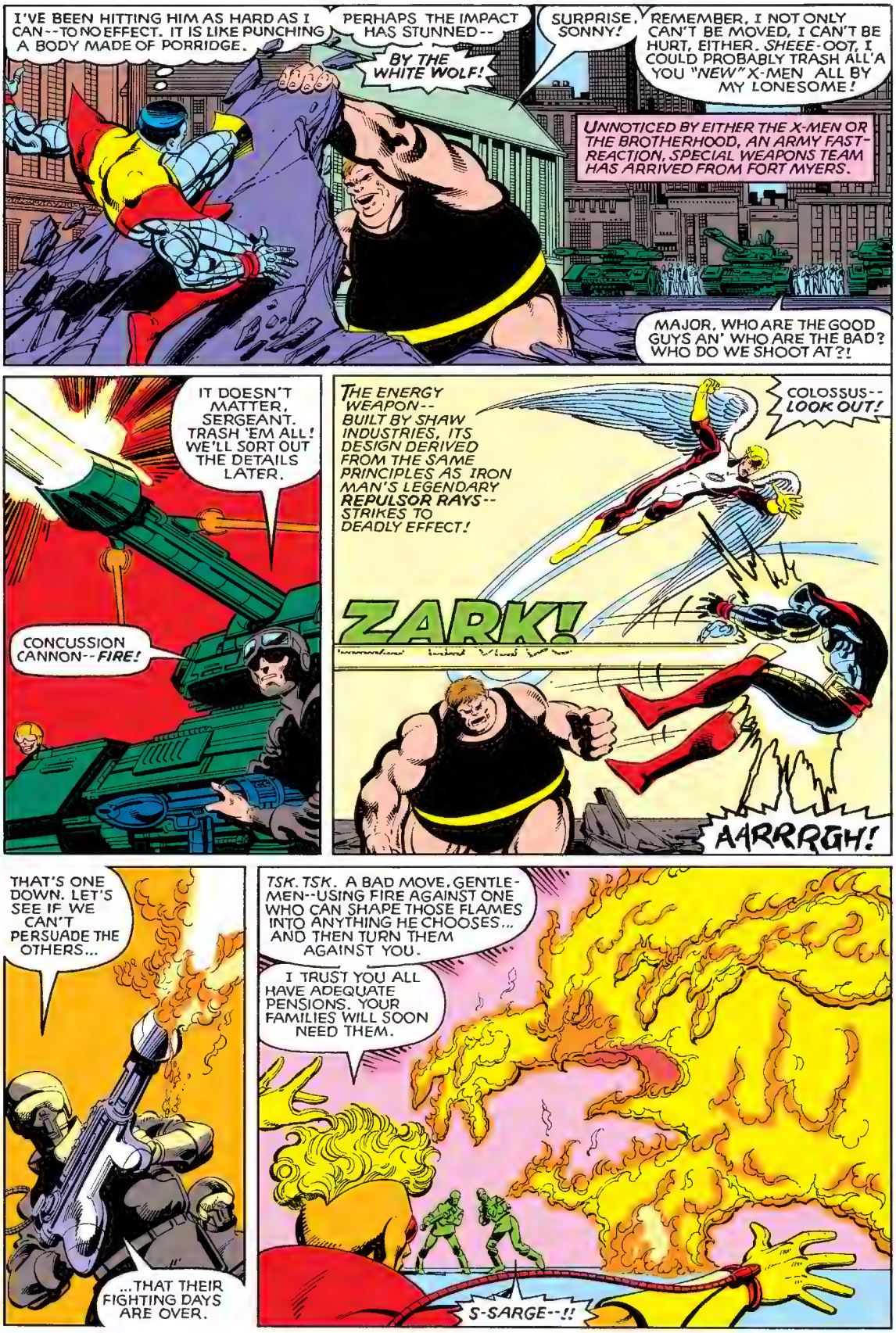
*FOR DETAILS, SEE LAST ISH -- LOUISE.


IN THAT FUTURE, THE FOUR PEOPLE WHOM KATE PRYDE LOVES MOST, SLOWLY, CAREFULLY PICK THEIR WAY THROUGH THE RUINS OF MIDTOWN MANHATTAN. WOLVERINE, STORM AND RACHEL ARE THE TRUEST FRIENDS SHE COULD EVER WISH FOR -- BUT PETER RASPUTIN (COLOSSUS) IS HER BELOVED HUSBAND.
FOR KATE, THE MOST TERRIBLE IRONY OF THEIR PLAN IS THAT, IF IT SUCEEDS, THE LOVE SHE AND PETER SHARED MIGHT VANISH ALONG WITH THE SENTINELS. BUT THE RISK -- THE POTENTIAL LOSS -- WAS ACCEPTED. THERE WAS SIMPLY NO ALTERNATIVE.
HOLD IT! ANOTHER PATROL!
THE SENTINELS ARE BUSY TONIGHT.
NOT SURPRISING, CONSIDERING I SUCCESSFULLY BUSTED YOU OUT OF YOUR SOUTH BRONX CONCENTRATION CAMP, TRASHING MORE'N OUR FAIR SHARE O' SENTINELS IN THE PROCESS.
THEY'LL BE EXPECTING US TO TRY TO MAKE CONTACT WITH MY OUTFIT, THE CANADIAN RESISTANCE ARMY.
THEY WON'T BE EXPECTING AN ATTACK ON THEIR MAIN HEADQUARTERS, THE BAXTER BUILDING.
IF WE KNOCK THAT OUT, WE'LL HAMSTRING THEIR OPERATIONS ACROSS THE ENTIRE CONTINENT. WE'LL HAVE TO HIT HARD AN' FAST...
I WILL TAKE THE LEAD, LOGAN.
OKAY, 'RORO. GOOD LUCK.
MY FRIEND, I STOPPED BELIEVING IN LUCK THE DAY I SAW MY PARENTS SLAIN BEFORE MY EYES, WHILE I SURVIVED. *
*X-MEN #102 -- LOUISE.
ALL MY LIFE, I'VE FLOWN WITH DEATH. I, WHO ONCE SWORE NEVER TO KILL, HAVE KILLED.
AND, IF I MUST, I WILL KILL AGAIN.
IN MY OWN WAY, I'VE BECOME AS HARD, AS RUTHLESS, AS MERCILESS AS WOLVERINE.
BAXTER BUILDING
I'VE BECOME SO NUMB I CAN'T EVEN HATE MYSELF ANYMORE. IF ANYTHING, MY SOUL FEELS... TIRED.
BUT SO LONG AS BREATH REMAINS WITHIN ME, I WILL DO WHAT MUST BE DONE.
RAW ENERGY FLOWS THROUGH STORM -- AUTOMATICALLY SHAPED AND FOCUSED BY HER MIND AND HER MUTANT METABOLISM -- MANIFESTING ITSELF AT LAST AS AN AWESOME, IRRESISTIBLE BOLT OF LIGHTNING!
Squarrrrrrrk!

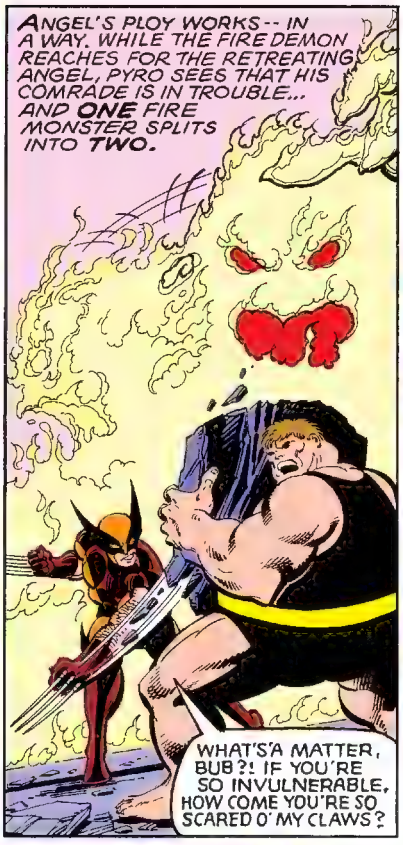

THE SENTINEL NEVER KNOWS WHAT HITS IT.
KONG!
RACHEL, YOU REMAIN HERE, TO PROTECT KITTY AS BEST YOU CAN. I WISH I KNEW HOW KATE IS FARING IN THE PAST. WHY IS IT TAKING SO LONG?
I DON'T KNOW, COLOSSUS. OUR WORLD MAY NOT CHANGE AT ALL. INSTEAD, KATE'S ACTIONS COULD CREATE AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT TIMELINE... AN ALTERNATE, PARALLEL EARTH.
SO THE TIMESWITCH COULD BE A WASTED EFFORT. GREAT.
WOLVERINE, I'M SORRY. I JUST DON'T KNOW!
STORM, THESE DOORS ARE LOCKED. YOU'LL HAVE TO GIMMICK THE LOCKS AN' ALARMS.
THERE WE ARE, WOLVERINE. IT SEEMS I HAVEN'T LOST MY TOUCH.
IT WAS A LIFETIME AGO WHEN I WAS A STREET URCHIN IN CAIRO, BEING TRAINED AS A THIEF BY ACHMED el-GIBAR. THOSE WERE HARD DAYS, BUT HAPPY ONES -- THOUGH I WAS HAPPIER STILL YEARS LATER IN KENYA.
THE URCHIN BECAME THE GODDESS, ORORO -- THE WEATHER-WITCH WHO USED HER MUTANT POWERS TO HELP THE LOCAL VILLAGES. I... I WISH I WAS THERE. I WISH I WAS THAT CHILD AGAIN. I MIGHT AS WELL WISH FOR THE MOON.
THE COAST IS CLEAR, MY FRIENDS.
THE BAXTER BUILDING -- THE OLD H.Q. OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR -- CONTAINS SOME OF THE MOST SOPHISTICATED ELECTRONICS LASH-UPS ON EARTH. THAT'S WHY THE SENTINELS CHOSE IT AS THEIR PRIMARY BASE.
BUT IT'S A BASE WITH AN ACHILLES' HEEL...
...IF OUR INTELLIGENCE REPORTS ARE ACCURATE, AND THE HOUSEKEEPING SYSTEM'S STILL OPERATIONAL.
THIS ELECTRIC EYE BEAM IN MY BELT BUCKLE SHOULD ACTIVATE THE F.F.'S PRIVATE ELEVATOR.
BINGO!
ALL ABOARD! NEXT STOP, THE ROOF--
-- AND THE FIGHT OF OUR LIVES.
NERVOUS, ORORO?
A BIT. MY CLAUSTROPHOBIA. CONFINED SPACES STILL PUT ME ON EDGE. AND I CAN'T HELP THINKING...
... THAT IT WOULDN'T TAKE MUCH TO TURN THIS TINY BOX... INTO A DEATHTRAP.

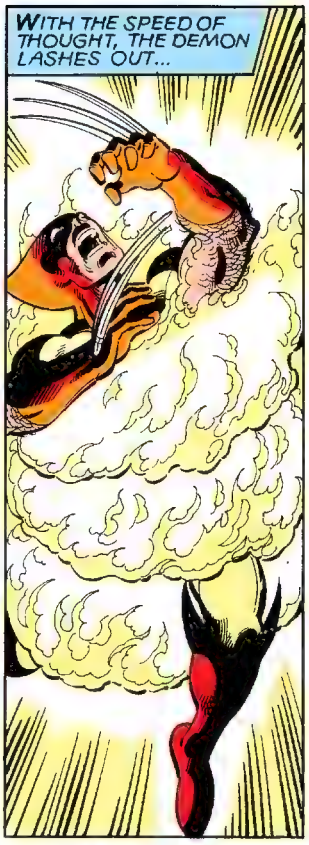
WASHINGTON, 1980...
THE X-MEN ARE LOSING! I WANT TO HELP, BUT I DARE NOT. THE NEWS REPORTS OF KELLY'S ASSASSINATION MADE NO MENTION OF PRECISELY WHO KILLED HIM. IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN ANY ONE OF THE BROTHERHOOD.
LIKE IT OR NOT, MY DUTY LIES WITH THE SENATOR -- MY PLACE, BY HIS SIDE.
I'M CERTAINLY "JUSTIFYING" XAVIER'S FAITH IN NAMING ME TEAM LEADER. MY DEBUT IS RAPIDLY TURNING INTO A DEBACLE.
CYCLOPS COULD DO A FAR BETTER JOB.
BUT CYCLOPS IS NOT HERE.*
*HE LEFT ON A LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN X-MEN #138 -- LOUISE.
I DID NOT WANT THIS POSITION. BUT NOW THAT I HAVE IT, I DO NOT INTEND TO FAIL!
WE ARE HAMPERED BY THE CRAMPED SPACE OF THE HEARING ROOM, AND BY OUR ATTEMPTS TO PROTECT THE INNOCENT BYSTANDERS TRAPPED IN HERE.
MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE, WE NEED SOME FIGHTING ROOM!
WITH THAT THOUGHT, STORM CALLS UP A HURRICANE BLAST OF WIND...


...CATCHING ALL THE COMBATANTS BY SURPRISE AND HURLING MOST OF THEM OUT OF THE CAPITOL BUILDING AND ONTO THE GREAT MALL...
GOOD GRIEF! THAT SOUND-- SOMEONE'S BOMBED THE CAPITOL!
YEAH-- AND IT WAS PROBABLY THE WHITE HOUSE THAT DID IT!
JOANIE, THOSE ARE THE X-MEN! WHAT A STORY!
I'VE GOT TO PHONE THIS IN TO THE PAPER!
RICK, SENATOR KELLY'S COMMITTEE WAS HOLDING HEARINGS TODAY. DO YOU THINK THEY'RE ALL RIGHT?
BEFORE THE YOUNG WOMAN'S FRANTIC QUESTION CAN BE ANSWERED, ANOTHER SHOCK-WAVE ROCKS THE MALL -- THE EXPLOSION OF FIST AGAINST ARMOR...
KRAMUS
...AS COLOSSUS DISCOVERS THAT, WHERE THE BLOB IS CONCERNED, HE IS A FAR FROM IRRESISTIBLE FORCE, AND A VERY MOVEABLE OBJECT.
I TOLD YA, RUSSKIE. UNLESS I DECIDE I WANTA MOVE, NO FORCE ON EARTH CAN MOVE ME.
BUT THAT AIN'T ALL I CAN DO. I'VE BEEN TRAININ' MYSELF TA MANIPULATE MY MASS. I'VE JUST MADE MY BODY SO DENSE, IT CAN SQUASH EVEN YOU FLAT!
THAT MAY WELL BE SO, BLOB. IF YOU LAND ON ME.
THOOM!


I'VE BEEN HITTING HIM AS HARD AS I CAN--TO NO EFFECT. IT IS LIKE PUNCHING A BODY MADE OF PORRIDGE.
PERHAPS THE IMPACT HAS STUNNED--
BY THE WHITE WOLF!
SURPRISE, SONNY!
REMEMBER, I NOT ONLY CAN'T BE MOVED, I CAN'T BE HURT, EITHER. SHEEE-OOT, I COULD PROBABLY TRASH ALL'A YOU "NEW" X-MEN ALL BY MY LONESOME!
UNNOTICED BY EITHER THE X-MEN OR THE BROTHERHOOD, AN ARMY FAST-REACTION, SPECIAL WEAPONS TEAM HAS ARRIVED FROM FORT MYERS.
MAJOR, WHO ARE THE GOOD GUYS AN' WHO ARE THE BAD? WHO DO WE SHOOT AT?!
IT DOESN'T MATTER, SERGEANT. TRASH 'EM ALL! WE'LL SORT OUT THE DETAILS LATER.
CONCUSSION CANNON--FIRE!
THE ENERGY WEAPON--BUILT BY SHAW INDUSTRIES, ITS DESIGN DERIVED FROM THE SAME PRINCIPLES AS IRON MAN'S LEGENDARY REPULSOR RAYS--STRIKES TO DEADLY EFFECT!
COLOSSUS--LOOK OUT!
ZARK!
AARRRGH!
THAT'S ONE DOWN. LET'S SEE IF WE CAN'T PERSUADE THE OTHERS...
...THAT THEIR FIGHTING DAYS ARE OVER.
TSK. TSK. A BAD MOVE, GENTLEMEN--USING FIRE AGAINST ONE WHO CAN SHAPE THOSE FLAMES INTO ANYTHING HE CHOOSES... AND THEN TURN THEM AGAINST YOU.
I TRUST YOU ALL HAVE ADEQUATE PENSIONS. YOUR FAMILIES WILL SOON NEED THEM.
S-SARGE--!!

THE SOLDIERS ARE PARALYZED WITH FEAR!
EVEN IF THEY RAN, PYRO'S BEASTIE WOULD FRY THEM BEFORE THEY GOT A DOZEN STEPS.
I'M THE BETTER TARGET--THE MORE DANGEROUS FOE, I'VE GOT TO CATCH PYRO'S ATTENTION, DRAW HIS CREATURE AFTER ME!


ANGEL'S PLOY WORKS -- IN A WAY. WHILE THE FIRE DEMON REACHES FOR THE RETREATING ANGEL, PYRO SEES THAT HIS COMRADE IS IN TROUBLE... AND ONE FIRE MONSTER SPLITS INTO TWO.
WHAT'S'A MATTER, BUB?! IF YOU'RE SO INVULNERABLE, HOW COME YOU'RE SO SCARED O' MY CLAWS?

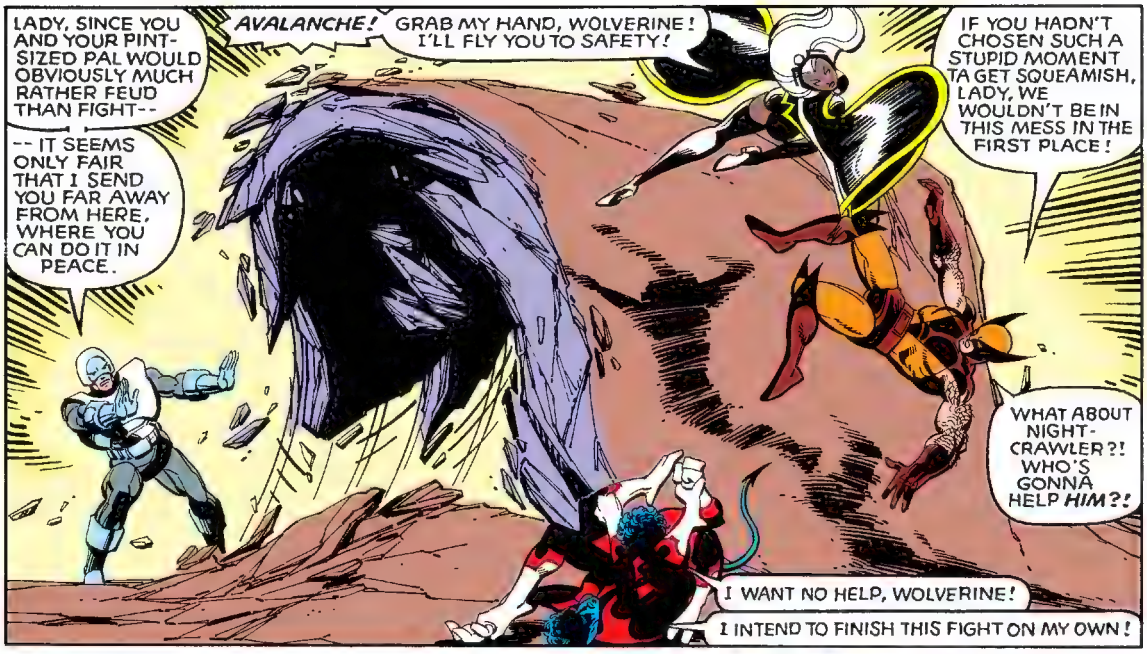

WITH THE SPEED OF THOUGHT, THE DEMON LASHES OUT...

ONLY SECONDS TO ACT. EVEN WOLVERINE'S MUTANT FAST-HEALING ABILITY CAN'T COPE WITH THE DAMAGE THAT FLAME HAND WILL DO.
PYRO'S FIRE MONSTER IS HUGE. I'LL NEED A CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF POWER TO COUNTER IT.
AND I'LL HAVE TO DO IT ON THE FIRST PASS. WOLVERINE WON'T SURVIVE LONG ENOUGH FOR ME TO TRY A SECOND.

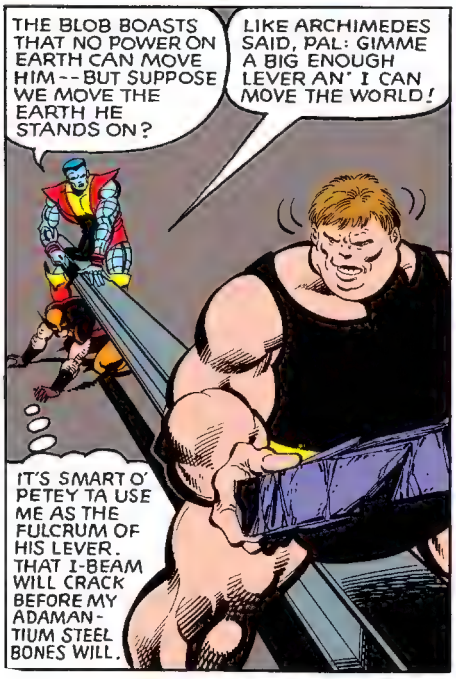
IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE, STORM CLIMBS HIGH ABOVE THE MALL, GATHERING SPEED AND STRENGTH AS SHE GOES. IN ANOTHER BLINK, SHE SLAMS DOWN THROUGH THE HEART OF PYRO'S CREATION.
...BLASTING IT APART WITH A MASSIVE WEDGE OF AIR THAT HITS WITH THE FORCE OF A BATTERING RAM.

WOLVERINE--MEIN VERRUCKT FREUND--ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?!
I'LL... LIVE, ELF. THE FIREPROOF UNSTABLE MOLECULES OF MY COSTUME SHIELDED ME FROM MOST O' THE FLAMES. AN' MY FAST-HEALING ABILITY'S ALREADY DEALIN' WITH MY BURNS.
I OWE STORM, PAL. A FEW MORE SECONDS AND... I'D HAVE BEEN A GONER.

OH, MAN-- 'CRAWLER, THIS... HURTS!
FOR YOU TO ADMIT THAT, WOLVERINE, YOU MUST BE IN AGONY. LET ME HELP--
WHAT THE DEVIL?!
WOLVERINE, BEWARE! THAT'S NOT ME--I'M ME! ONE OF THE BROTHERHOOD MUST BE A SHAPE-CHANGER!
WHOEVER YOU ARE, VILLAIN, YOU'VE JUST BITTEN OFF MORE THAN YOU CAN CHEW. I LIKE BEING UNIQUE. I DON'T TAKE KINDLY TO DOPPELGANGERS.
NEITHER DO I!
THIS IS CRAZY! WHICH IS WHICH?!
I'M STILL TOO WOOZY FROM MY BURNS-- MY SENSES CAN'T TELL 'EM APART.
BUT I FIGURE THE REAL NIGHTCRAWLER OUGHT'A BE ABLE TA TELEPORT OUTTA THE RANGE OF MY CLAWS.
WOLVERINE, SHEATHE YOUR CLAWS!
SNIKT!
NOT A CHANCE. WE'RE IN THE MIDDLE OF A FIGHT, STORM. I'M IN NO MOOD FER A DEBATE!
SHEATHE THEM-- OR USE THEM ON ME.
THAT CAN BE ARRANGED, BABE!
GODDESS, HE MEANS IT!
I AM LEADER OF THE X-MEN. WHILE THAT IS SO, YOU WILL USE YOUR CLAWS WHEN I COMMAND. NO OTHER TIME.
I WOULDN'T TAKE THAT FROM CYCLOPS!
YOU WILL TAKE IT FROM ME. YOU POSSESS SPEED, STRENGTH -- YOUR UNBREAKABLE ADAMANTIUM SKELETON MAKES YOU NEARLY INVULNERABLE. YOU SHOULD NOT NEED YOUR CLAWS--
--EXCEPT IN THE MOST EXTREME OF SITUATIONS, AGAINST THE DEADLIEST AND MOST POWERFUL OF FOES.
ALL RIGHT, STORM. I'LL DO IT YER WAY-- FER NOW.
BUT THIS CONVERSATION AIN'T FINISHED. NOT BY A LONG SHOT.
SNAKT!

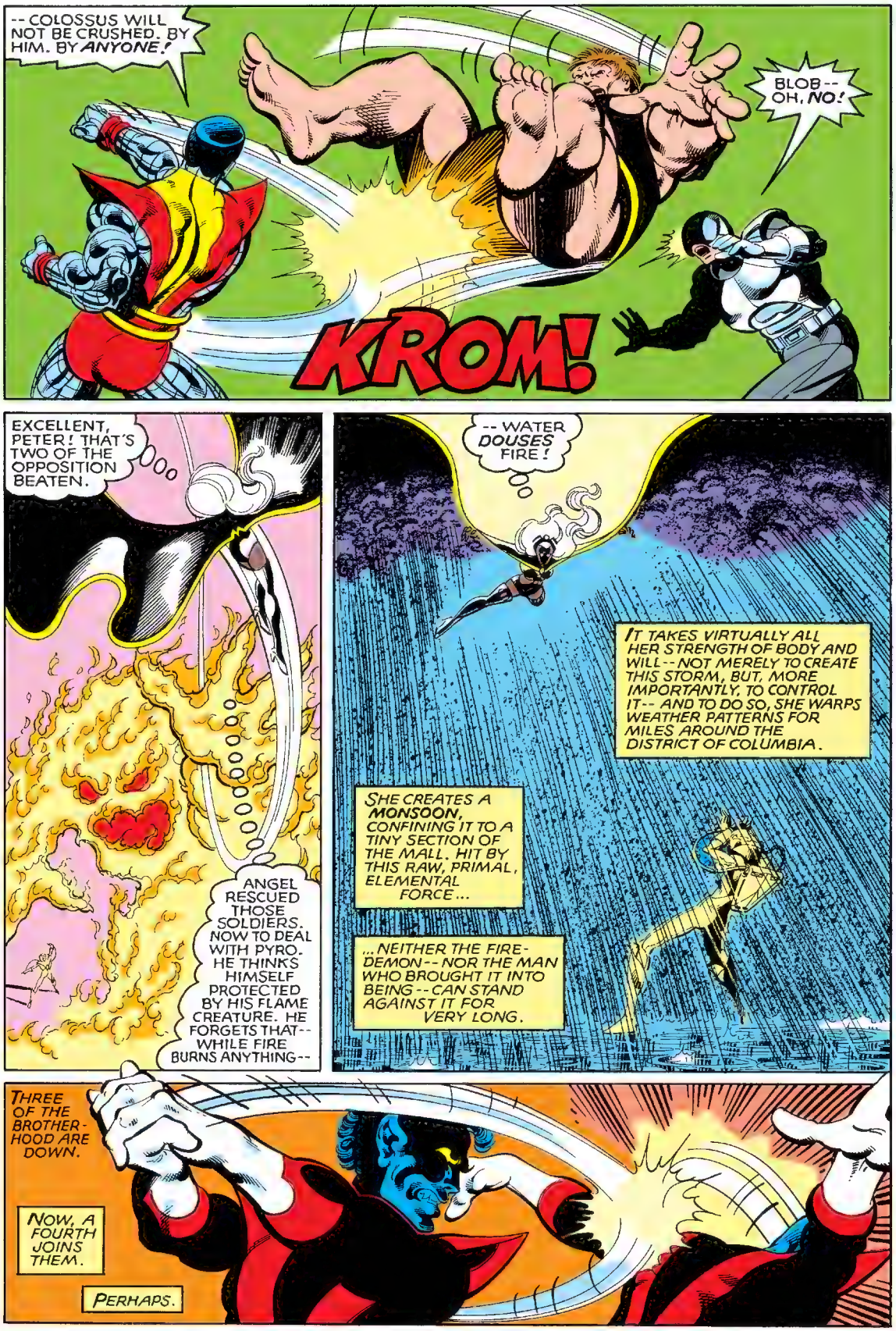

LADY, SINCE YOU AND YOUR PINT-SIZED PAL WOULD OBVIOUSLY MUCH RATHER FEUD THAN FIGHT--
-- IT SEEMS ONLY FAIR THAT I SEND YOU FAR AWAY FROM HERE, WHERE YOU CAN DO IT IN PEACE.
AVALANCHE!
GRAB MY HAND, WOLVERINE! I'LL FLY YOU TO SAFETY!
IF YOU HADN'T CHOSEN SUCH A STUPID MOMENT TA GET SQUEAMISH, LADY, WE WOULDN'T BE IN THIS MESS IN THE FIRST PLACE!
WHAT ABOUT NIGHT-CRAWLER?! WHO'S GONNA HELP HIM?!
I WANT NO HELP, WOLVERINE!
I INTEND TO FINISH THIS FIGHT ON MY OWN!

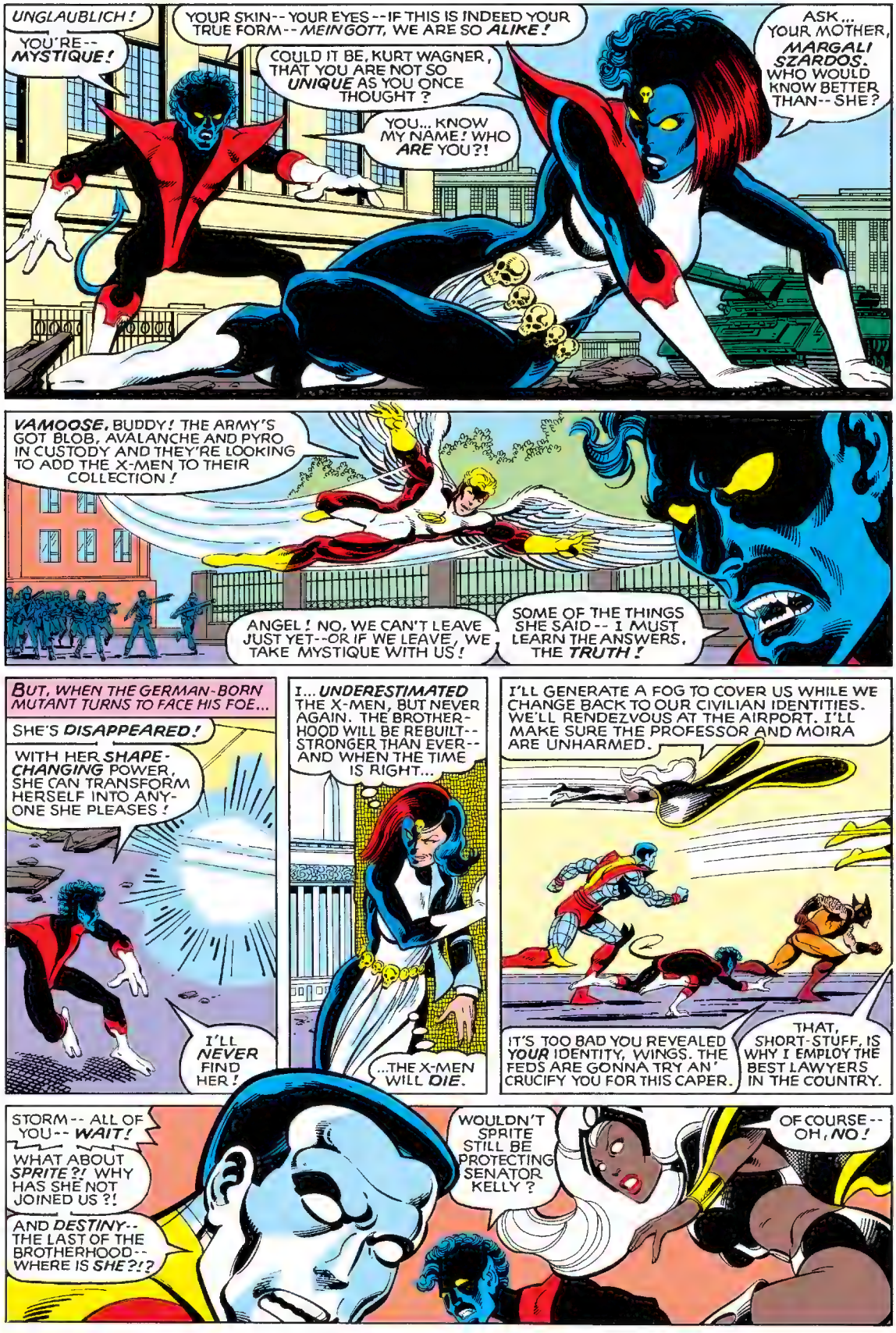
PYRO'S FLAME DEMON HAS GIVEN UP ON ME! HE'S ENDANGERING MORE SOLDIERS!
I'VE GOT TO AIRLIFT THEM OUT OF THE WAY.
FINE BY ME, BUB. I'M IN A MOOD TA DEFEAT SOME-ONE.
THE BIGGER, THE BETTER!
WOLVERINE, COME WITH ME! I NEED YOUR ASSISTANCE TO DEFEAT THE BLOB!

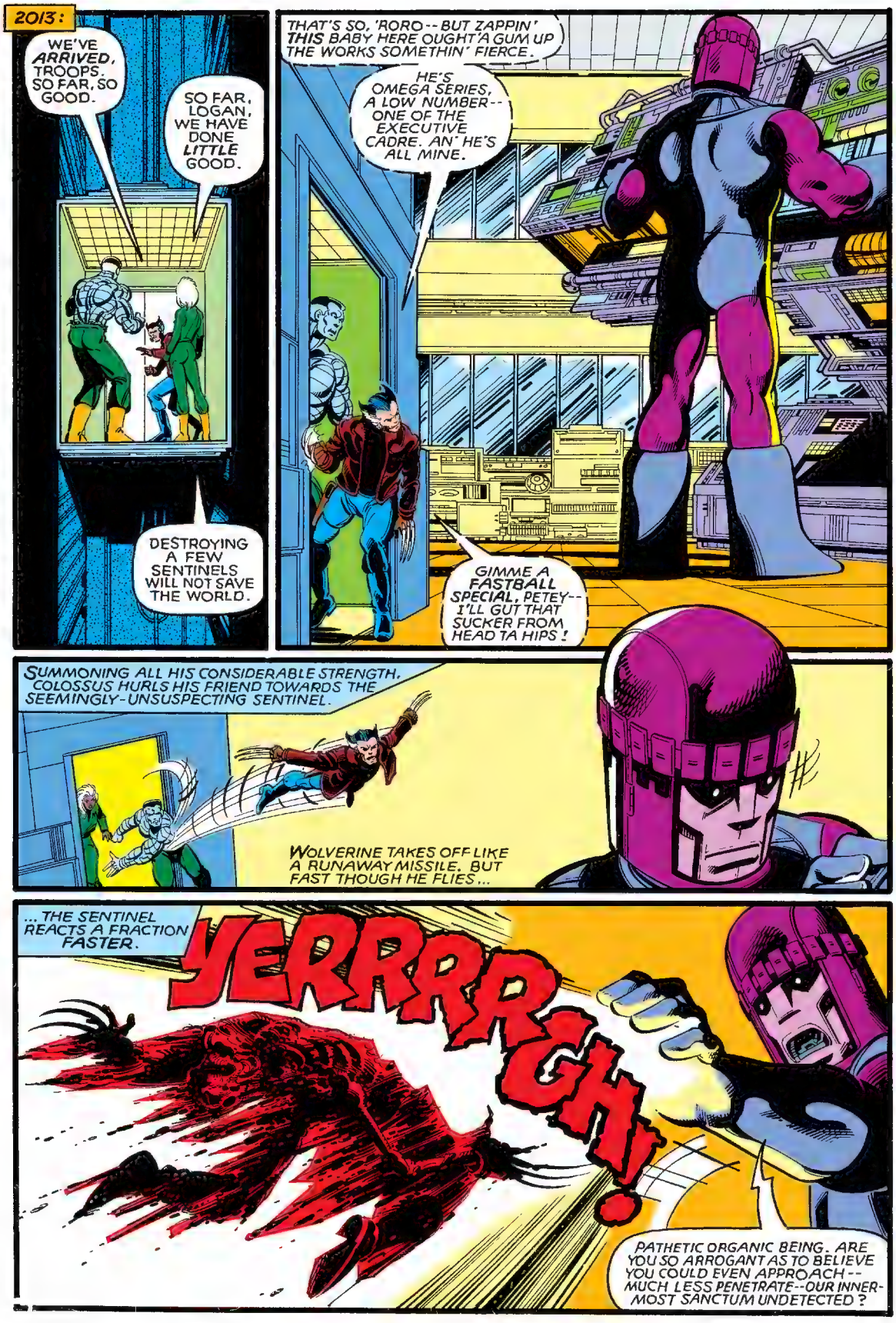

THE BLOB BOASTS THAT NO POWER ON EARTH CAN MOVE HIM--BUT SUPPOSE WE MOVE THE EARTH HE STANDS ON?
LIKE ARCHIMEDES SAID, PAL: GIMME A BIG ENOUGH LEVER AN' I CAN MOVE THE WORLD!
IT'S SMART O' PETEY TA USE ME AS THE FULCRUM OF HIS LEVER. THAT I-BEAM WILL CRACK BEFORE MY ADAMAN-TIUM STEEL BONES WILL.

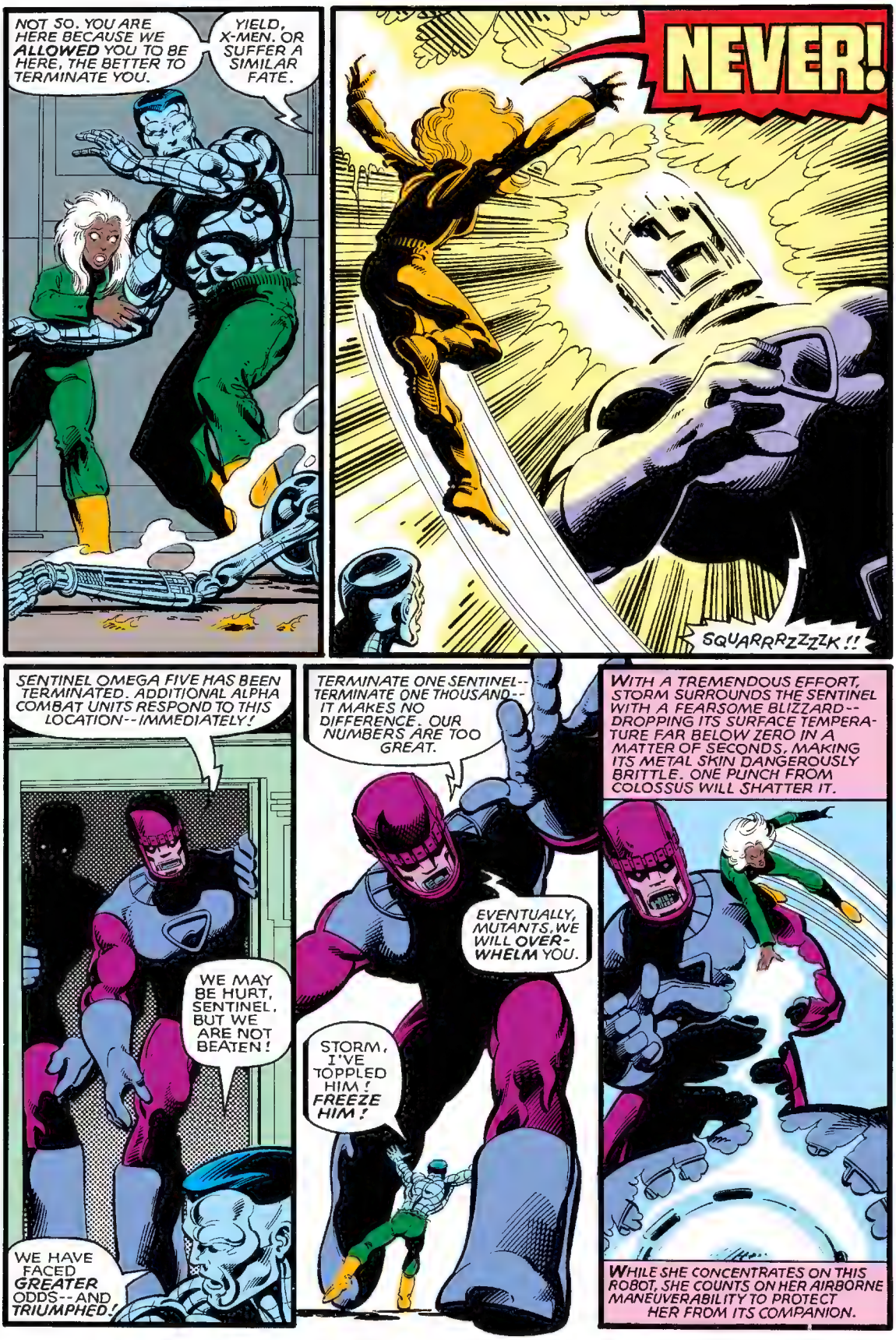
YEEEOWW!
YA GOT HIM IN THE AIR, COLOSSUS. WHAT ARE YA GONNA DO WHEN HE COMES DOWN?!

YOU GONNA DIE, RUSSKIE! THAT'S A PROMISE!
I INTEND TO PROVE THAT NO MATTER HOW AWESOME THE BLOB THINKS HIS POWER HAS BECOME--


-- COLOSSUS WILL NOT BE CRUSHED. BY HIM. BY ANYONE!
BLOB -- OH, NO!
KROM!
EXCELLENT, PETER! THAT'S TWO OF THE OPPOSITION BEATEN.
ANGEL RESCUED THOSE SOLDIERS. NOW TO DEAL WITH PYRO. HE THINKS HIMSELF PROTECTED BY HIS FLAME CREATURE. HE FORGETS THAT -- WHILE FIRE BURNS ANYTHING --
-- WATER DOUSES FIRE!
IT TAKES VIRTUALLY ALL HER STRENGTH OF BODY AND WILL -- NOT MERELY TO CREATE THIS STORM, BUT, MORE IMPORTANTLY, TO CONTROL IT -- AND TO DO SO, SHE WARPS WEATHER PATTERNS FOR MILES AROUND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.
SHE CREATES A MONSOON, CONFINING IT TO A TINY SECTION OF THE MALL. HIT BY THIS RAW, PRIMAL, ELEMENTAL FORCE...
...NEITHER THE FIRE-DEMON -- NOR THE MAN WHO BROUGHT IT INTO BEING -- CAN STAND AGAINST IT FOR VERY LONG.
THREE OF THE BROTHER-HOOD ARE DOWN.
NOW, A FOURTH JOINS THEM.
PERHAPS.


UNGLAUBLICH!
YOU'RE-- MYSTIQUE!
YOUR SKIN-- YOUR EYES --IF THIS IS INDEED YOUR TRUE FORM-- MEINGOTT, WE ARE SO ALIKE!
COULD IT BE, KURT WAGNER, THAT YOU ARE NOT SO UNIQUE AS YOU ONCE THOUGHT?
YOU... KNOW MY NAME! WHO ARE YOU?!
ASK... YOUR MOTHER, MARGALI SZARDOS. WHO WOULD KNOW BETTER THAN-- SHE?
VAMOOSE, BUDDY! THE ARMY'S GOT BLOB, AVALANCHE AND PYRO IN CUSTODY AND THEY'RE LOOKING TO ADD THE X-MEN TO THEIR COLLECTION!
ANGEL! NO, WE CAN'T LEAVE JUST YET--OR IF WE LEAVE, WE TAKE MYSTIQUE WITH US!
SOME OF THE THINGS SHE SAID-- I MUST LEARN THE ANSWERS. THE TRUTH!
BUT, WHEN THE GERMAN-BORN MUTANT TURNS TO FACE HIS FOE...
SHE'S DISAPPEARED!
WITH HER SHAPE-CHANGING POWER, SHE CAN TRANSFORM HERSELF INTO ANY-ONE SHE PLEASES!
I'LL NEVER FIND HER!
I... UNDERESTIMATED THE X-MEN, BUT NEVER AGAIN. THE BROTHER-HOOD WILL BE REBUILT-- STRONGER THAN EVER-- AND WHEN THE TIME IS RIGHT...
...THE X-MEN WILL DIE.
I'LL GENERATE A FOG TO COVER US WHILE WE CHANGE BACK TO OUR CIVILIAN IDENTITIES. WE'LL RENDEZVOUS AT THE AIRPORT. I'LL MAKE SURE THE PROFESSOR AND MOIRA ARE UNHARMED.
IT'S TOO BAD YOU REVEALED YOUR IDENTITY, WINGS. THE FEDS ARE GONNA TRY AN' CRUCIFY YOU FOR THIS CAPER.
THAT, SHORT-STUFF, IS WHY I EMPLOY THE BEST LAWYERS IN THE COUNTRY.
STORM-- ALL OF YOU-- WAIT!
WHAT ABOUT SPRITE?! WHY HAS SHE NOT JOINED US?!
AND DESTINY-- THE LAST OF THE BROTHERHOOD-- WHERE IS SHE?!?
WOULDN'T SPRITE STILL BE PROTECTING SENATOR KELLY?
OF COURSE-- OH, NO!

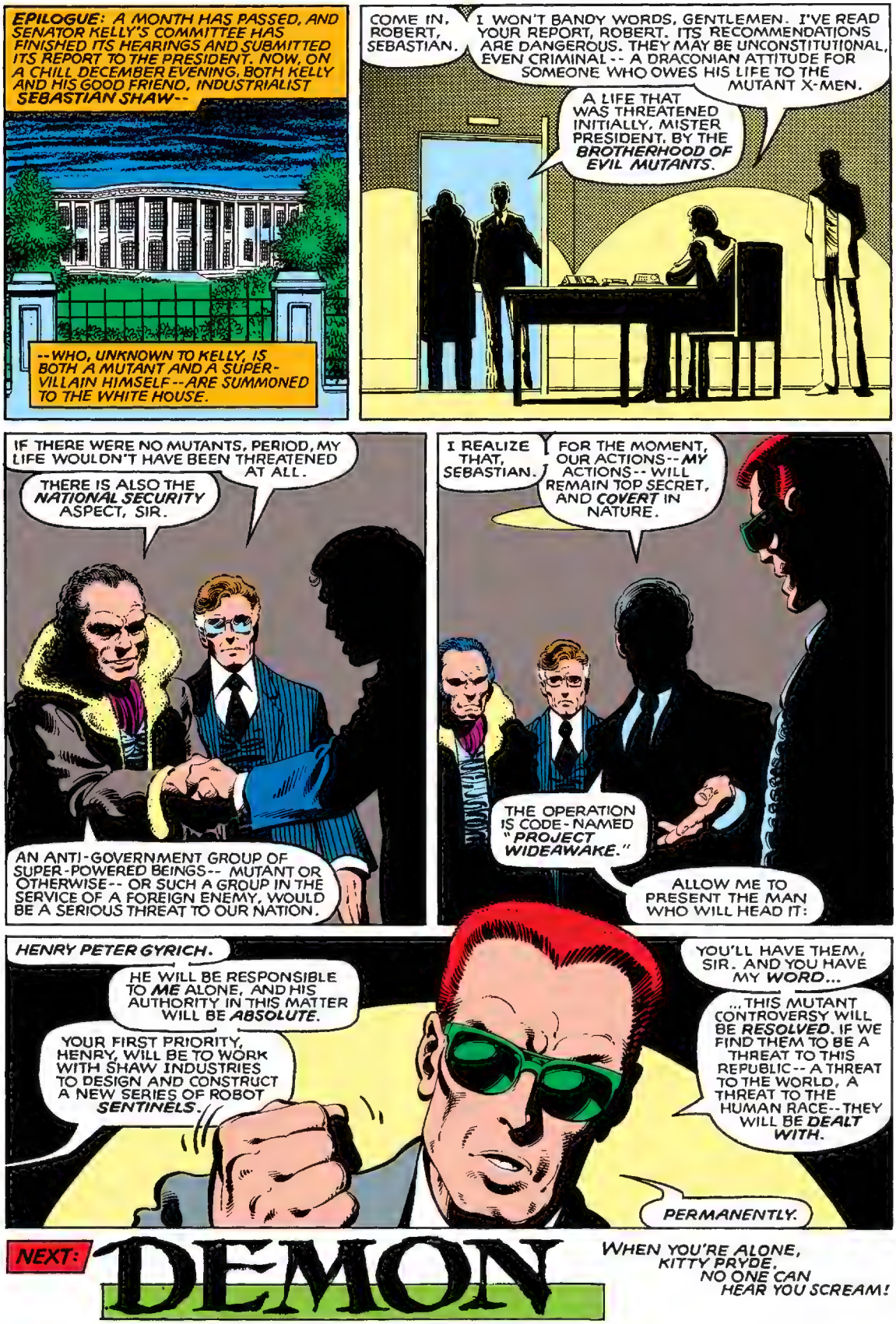

2013:
WE'VE ARRIVED, TROOPS. SO FAR, SO GOOD.
SO FAR, LOGAN, WE HAVE DONE LITTLE GOOD.
DESTROYING A FEW SENTINELS WILL NOT SAVE THE WORLD.
THAT'S SO, 'RORO--BUT ZAPPIN' THIS BABY HERE OUGHT'A GUM UP THE WORKS SOMETHIN' FIERCE.
HE'S OMEGA SERIES, A LOW NUMBER--ONE OF THE EXECUTIVE CADRE. AN' HE'S ALL MINE.
GIMME A FASTBALL SPECIAL, PETEY--I'LL GUT THAT SUCKER FROM HEAD TA HIPS!
SUMMONING ALL HIS CONSIDERABLE STRENGTH, COLOSSUS HURLS HIS FRIEND TOWARDS THE SEEMINGLY-UNSUSPECTING SENTINEL.
WOLVERINE TAKES OFF LIKE A RUNAWAY MISSILE. BUT FAST THOUGH HE FLIES...
...THE SENTINEL REACTS A FRACTION FASTER.
YERRRRGH!
PATHETIC ORGANIC BEING. ARE YOU SO ARROGANT AS TO BELIEVE YOU COULD EVEN APPROACH--MUCH LESS PENETRATE--OUR INNERMOST SANCTUM UNDETECTED?


NOT SO. YOU ARE HERE BECAUSE WE ALLOWED YOU TO BE HERE, THE BETTER TO TERMINATE YOU.
YIELD, X-MEN. OR SUFFER A SIMILAR FATE.
NEVER!
SQUARRRZZZZK!!
SENTINEL OMEGA FIVE HAS BEEN TERMINATED. ADDITIONAL ALPHA COMBAT UNITS RESPOND TO THIS LOCATION--IMMEDIATELY!
WE MAY BE HURT, SENTINEL, BUT WE ARE NOT BEATEN!
WE HAVE FACED GREATER ODDS--AND TRIUMPHED!
TERMINATE ONE SENTINEL--TERMINATE ONE THOUSAND--IT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE. OUR NUMBERS ARE TOO GREAT.
EVENTUALLY, MUTANTS, WE WILL OVERWHELM YOU.
STORM, I'VE TOPPLED HIM! FREEZE HIM!
WITH A TREMENDOUS EFFORT, STORM SURROUNDS THE SENTINEL WITH A FEARSOME BLIZZARD--DROPPING ITS SURFACE TEMPERATURE FAR BELOW ZERO IN A MATTER OF SECONDS, MAKING ITS METAL SKIN DANGEROUSLY BRITTLE. ONE PUNCH FROM COLOSSUS WILL SHATTER IT.
WHILE SHE CONCENTRATES ON THIS ROBOT, SHE COUNTS ON HER AIRBORNE MANEUVERABILITY TO PROTECT HER FROM ITS COMPANION.

THIS TIME, SHE HOPES IN VAIN.
PETER!!
ORORO!!
PETER RASPUTIN WAS EVER A GENTLE MAN. A MAN OF PEACE. A MAN WHO-- LIKE THE WOMAN HE HOLDS IN HIS ARMS-- THOUGHT LIFE THE MOST PRECIOUS OF GIFTS, AND LOVE THE MOST PRECIOUS CELEBRATION OF THAT GIFT.
ORORO WAS A SISTER TO HIM, THE BEST FRIEND HE EVER HAD. AND HE FINDS THAT HER DEATH IS... UNENDURABLE.
BOOM!
HIS HANDS RED WITH HER BLOOD, HE SCREAMS. AND, MOMENTS LATER, WHEN HE FEELS HIMSELF GRIPPED BY A MURDEROUS BERSERKER FURY TO RIVAL WOLVERINE'S, HE WELCOMES IT.
ON THE STREET FAR BELOW, TEARS STREAM DOWN RACHEL'S FACE-- BUT SHE MAKES NO MOVE TO WIPE THEM AWAY.
INSTEAD SHE HOLDS THE UNCONSCIOUS BODY OF KATHERINE PRYDE-RASPUTIN-- WITHIN WHICH RESIDES THE MIND AND SOUL OF KITTY PRYDE-- TIGHTER TO HER BREAST.
IN MY MIND, I FELT ORORO AND LOGAN DIE. I CAN FEEL PETER'S RAGE. I WANT TO BREAK CONTACT, BUT I... I CAN'T. I DON'T WANT PETER TO BE ALONE WHEN HE... WHEN HE...
HE'S DEAD.
SO QUICKLY.
FUNNY. I'VE EXPERIENCED DEATH SO OFTEN IN THE MINDS OF OTHERS, YET I'M TERRIFIED OF DYING MYSELF.
IF KATE'S BODY DIES HERE, WILL HER MIND BE TRAPPED IN THE PAST? IF SO, I WISH HER A... HAPPIER LIFE THAN THE ONE SHE LIVED.
WE DID ALL WE COULD, MY DARLING KATE.
NOW, IT'S UP TO YOU.

1980:
THE BLIND PRECOG, DESTINY, HAS SENATOR KELLY CORNERED. BUT... IF SHE CAN PSYCHICALLY SCAN THE FUTURE, WHY HASN'T SHE SPOTTED ME?! UNLESS...
...THE TIMESWITCH HAS MADE ME SOMEHOW INVISIBLE TO HER PRESCIENT ABILITIES!
MY COLLEAGUES HAVE BEEN DEFEATED, YET VICTORY WILL STILL BE OURS-- WITH YOUR DEATH.
MURDERING ME WILL ACCOMPLISH NOTHING. TRUE, PEOPLE WILL FEAR MUTANTS, AS THEY FEAR ALL TERRORISTS--
--BUT THEY WON'T BE COWED BY THAT FEAR. THEY'LL FIGHT BACK. THEY'LL DESTROY YOU, DESTINY!
POSSIBLY. BUT YOU ARE A GREATER THREAT ALIVE.
DO NOT TRY TO EVADE MY CROSSBOW BOLT, SENATOR. I WILL SENSE YOUR PLANS A HEARTBEAT BEFORE YOU EVEN FORMULATE THEM, AND FIRE WHERE YOU ARE GOING TO BE.
I WOULDN'T GIVE YOU THAT SATISFACTION. IF I GOT MY HANDS ON YOU, MUTANT, I'D PROBABLY BREAK YOUR NECK...
...BUT I WON'T RUN.
DESTINY LAUGHS SOFTLY, AND TIGHTENS HER FINGER ON THE TRIGGER.
BUT, AS DESTINY FIRES, KATE "PHASES" WRAITH-LIKE THROUGH HER, CALLING UPON HER DECADES OF TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE TO ACT AS HER CHILD SELF COULD NOT...
MY-MY-- MIND!
THE TEMPORAL ANOMALY-- A PART OF ME-- CONSUMING ME!
SENATOR-- DUCK!
SHE WILLS HER SHOULDERS TO BECOME SOLID, BASHING THE OTHER WOMAN'S ARM AND THROWING OFF HER AIM.
IN THAT SPLIT-SECOND, AN ABYSS OPENS WITHIN KATE PRYDE. REALITY TWISTS INSIDE-OUT AND, SUDDENLY, SHE COMES FACE-TO-FACE WITH HERSELF AS A CHILD:-- SO INNOCENT, SO VULNERABLE, SO YOUNG.
IMPULSIVELY, SHE GIVES HERSELF A KISS...
...AND LETS THE WINDS OF ETERNITY SWEEP HER HOME.

KI-- I MEAN, SPRITE, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?!
SENATOR KELLY, HAVE YOU BEEN HARMED?
WHO ARE YOU, YOUNG WOMAN? WHO IS THIS CHILD?!
S-STORM? WH-WHERE... AM I? THIS ISN'T THE DANGER ROOM.
I... FEEL... AWFULLLL...
I AM STORM, LEADER OF THE X-MEN. AND I SUSPECT THIS... CHILD IS THE PERSON WHO JUST SAVED YOUR LIFE.
MUTANTS, LIKE PEOPLE, ARE BOTH GOOD AND BAD. YOU WOULD DO WELL TO REMEMBER THAT, SENATOR, BEFORE YOU SEEK TO CONDEMN US ALL.
S-STORM...?
PROFESSOR, THE AUTHORITIES ARE COMING. I MUST LEAVE.
WE WILL RENDEZVOUS AT ANGEL'S PRIVATE AIRCRAFT.
XAVIER, Dr. MacTAGGERT-- THANK HEAVEN YOU'RE ALL RIGHT!
DESTINY-- CAPTURED AS WELL!
HAVE NO FEAR, MY DEAR FRIEND. NEITHER YOU NOR THE BROTHERHOOD WILL BE IN PRISON FOR LONG. THIS, MYSTIQUE SWEARS!
LATER, EN ROUTE TO THE WESTCHESTER, NEW YORK MANSION THAT SERVES BOTH AS PROFESSOR XAVIER'S SCHOOL FOR GIFTED YOUNGSTERS AND THE SECRET HEADQUARTERS OF THE X-MEN, PROFESSOR X EXPLAINS ALL THAT HAS TRANSPIRED TO A DUMBFOUNDED SPRITE...
YOU REMEMBER NOTHING AFTER BLACKING OUT IN THE DANGER ROOM?
NOPE. EXCEPT, WELL, I THINK I FELT SOMEONE KISS ME JUST BEFORE I WOKE UP.
PERHAPS IT IS FOR THE BEST. I THINK IF I KNEW MY FUTURE, I WOULD SPEND MY LIFE TRYING TO CHANGE IT.
YOU SAID YOU MINDSCANNED ME, PROFESSOR. WHAT DID YOU FIND OUT-- ABOUT ME, I MEAN?
THAT KATE PRYDE IS AS DELIGHTFUL AND ADMIRABLE A PERSON AS KITTY PRYDE. THE REST YOU WILL DISCOVER IN DUE COURSE.
PROFESSOR, WE SAVED SENATOR KELLY. KITTY'S MIND HAS BEEN RETURNED TO HER BODY.
DOES THAT MEAN WE CHANGED THE FUTURE?
I DO NOT KNOW, WARREN. CLICHÉ THOUGH IT SOUNDS, ONLY TIME WILL TELL.


EPILOGUE: A MONTH HAS PASSED, AND SENATOR KELLY'S COMMITTEE HAS FINISHED ITS HEARINGS AND SUBMITTED ITS REPORT TO THE PRESIDENT. NOW, ON A CHILL DECEMBER EVENING, BOTH KELLY AND HIS GOOD FRIEND, INDUSTRIALIST SEBASTIAN SHAW--
--WHO, UNKNOWN TO KELLY, IS BOTH A MUTANT AND A SUPER-VILLAIN HIMSELF--ARE SUMMONED TO THE WHITE HOUSE.
COME IN, ROBERT, SEBASTIAN.
I WON'T BANDY WORDS, GENTLEMEN. I'VE READ YOUR REPORT, ROBERT. ITS RECOMMENDATIONS ARE DANGEROUS. THEY MAY BE UNCONSTITUTIONAL, EVEN CRIMINAL -- A DRACONIAN ATTITUDE FOR SOMEONE WHO OWES HIS LIFE TO THE MUTANT X-MEN.
A LIFE THAT WAS THREATENED INITIALLY, MISTER PRESIDENT, BY THE BROTHERHOOD OF EVIL MUTANTS.
IF THERE WERE NO MUTANTS, PERIOD, MY LIFE WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN THREATENED AT ALL.
THERE IS ALSO THE NATIONAL SECURITY ASPECT, SIR.
AN ANTI-GOVERNMENT GROUP OF SUPER-POWERED BEINGS-- MUTANT OR OTHERWISE-- OR SUCH A GROUP IN THE SERVICE OF A FOREIGN ENEMY, WOULD BE A SERIOUS THREAT TO OUR NATION.
I REALIZE THAT, SEBASTIAN.
FOR THE MOMENT, OUR ACTIONS--MY ACTIONS-- WILL REMAIN TOP SECRET, AND COVERT IN NATURE.
THE OPERATION IS CODE-NAMED "PROJECT WIDEAWAKE."
ALLOW ME TO PRESENT THE MAN WHO WILL HEAD IT:
HENRY PETER GYRICH.
HE WILL BE RESPONSIBLE TO ME ALONE, AND HIS AUTHORITY IN THIS MATTER WILL BE ABSOLUTE.
YOUR FIRST PRIORITY, HENRY, WILL BE TO WORK WITH SHAW INDUSTRIES TO DESIGN AND CONSTRUCT A NEW SERIES OF ROBOT SENTINELS.
YOU'LL HAVE THEM, SIR. AND YOU HAVE MY WORD...
...THIS MUTANT CONTROVERSY WILL BE RESOLVED. IF WE FIND THEM TO BE A THREAT TO THIS REPUBLIC-- A THREAT TO THE WORLD, A THREAT TO THE HUMAN RACE--THEY WILL BE DEALT WITH.
PERMANENTLY.
NEXT: DEMON
WHEN YOU'RE ALONE, KITTY PRYDE, NO ONE CAN HEAR YOU SCREAM!

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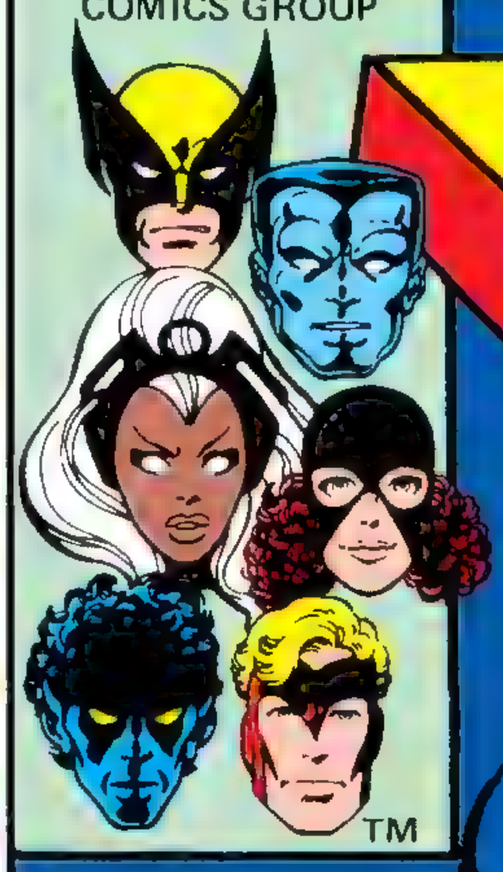
Merry Christmas

X-MEN™



TM

TERRY austin 1980

...GUESS WHAT JUST CAME DOWN THE CHIMNEY!

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Cyclops. Storm. Nightcrawler. Wolverine. Colossus. Children of the atom, students of Charles Xavier, MUTANTS — feared and hated by the world they have sworn to protect. These are the STRANGEST heroes of all!

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE UNCANNY X-MEN!™

HER NAME IS STORM, AND ALTHOUGH IN HER YOUNG LIFE SHE HAS BEEN HAILED AS A GODDESS. SHE IS IN TRUTH A MUTANT-- MISTRESS OF THE WIND AND WEATHER AND NOW A MEMBER OF THE UNCANNY X-MEN, A TEAM OF MUTANT SUPER-HEROES.
ARRGHH!
THIS AUTUMN NIGHT, IN THE SKY ABOVE NEW YORK'S WESTCHESTER COUNTY, SHE HAS COME FACE TO FACE WITH BEINGS AS FOUL AS THE PIT THAT SPAWNED THEM --
-- MEMBERS OF AN ANCIENT RACE THAT ONCE RULED THE EARTH AND WHO MEAN TO RULE IT AGAIN.

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THEY ARE THE N'GARAI--THE ELDER GODS OF LEGEND, THE ULTIMATE EVIL. ONE OF THEIR NUMBER HAS ATTACKED THE X-MEN IN THE MANSION THAT SERVES AS THE MUTANTS' SECRET HEADQUARTERS.

I... CAN'T LET THESE MONSTERS HIT ME AGAIN. NEVER FELT... SUCH AGONY.

BELOW STORM IS AN AGES-OLD CAIRN, WHOSE MALEFIC POWER SUSTAINS THE CREATURE THAT THREATENS HER FRIENDS.

UNLESS SHE DESTROYS IT UTTERLY, THE X-MEN ARE DOOMED.

BUT WHAT ARE THESE CREATURES?! THEY AREN'T REAL!

THEY'RE JUST THINGS OF SMOKE AND LIGHT, CREATED BY THE CAIRN. HOW CAN I FIGHT THEM?!

THAT BOLT OF ENERGY-- NO TIME TO AVOID IT--!

UNNNGNH!!

MY MIND... FUZZY... NOTHING FITS TOGETHER... I CAN'T ...CONCENTRATE...

GODDESS-- NO! I'M BEING PULLED INTO THE CAIRN-- INTO THE DARK! AND NO MATTER HOW HARD I TRY, I CAN'T BREAK LOOSE! BUT I MUST!

I MUST BE FREE!

AND I SHALL BE FREE!

IT'S AS IF THE SUN HAD MOMENTARILY TOUCHED THE EARTH. RAW ENERGY-- FUELED IN PART BY STORM'S CLAUSTROPHOBIC FEAR OF BEING BURIED ALIVE, IN PART BY AN ATAVISTIC TERROR BORN OF SUB-CONSCIOUS RACIAL MEMORIES OF THE N'GARAI-- EXPLODES AROUND HER...

...SHATTERING THE CAIRN. AT THE SAME INSTANT, THE THING SPAWNED BY THAT CAIRN SIMPLY... CEASES TO EXIST.

SHAKEN TO HER SOUL BY HER NARROW ESCAPE, STORM SOARS WEARILY HOME*...

*FOR DETAILS, SEE X-MEN #96 -- LOUISE.

...AS PROFESSOR XAVIER -- THE X-MEN'S FOUNDER AND MENTOR-- TELEPATHICALLY ASSURES HER THAT THE BATTLE IS OVER, THE VICTORY WON.

MONTHS PASS, AND NATURE BEGINS TO HEAL THE TERRIBLE WOUNDS INFLICTED BY THAT BRIEF, FIERCE COMBAT.

THE X-MEN MOVE ON TO NEW CHALLENGES, NEW FOES. THEY KNOW TRIUMPH, AND TRAGEDY.

AND, IN TIME, THEIR BATTLE WITH N'GARAI-- ONE OF THE FIRST THE "NEW" X-MEN FOUGHT-- IS FORGOTTEN

FORGOTTEN IT MAY BE-- BY THE X-MEN BUT IT IS FAR FROM OVER.

PROFESSOR XAVIER BELIEVED THAT DESTROYING THE CAIRN WOULD FOREVER SEAL THIS GATEWAY BETWEEN THE N'GARAI DIMENSION AND EARTH.

HE WAS WRONG.

DOUGLAS, YOU ARE A HOPELESS ROMANTIC!

SO SUE ME!

ELLIE, IT'S OUR FIRST CHRISTMAS. WE'LL HAVE YEARS AND YEARS TO GET PRE-CHOPPED TREES OR PLASTIC ONES.

I WANT THIS ONE TO BE *SPECIAL.*

I WASN'T ARGUING, DOUG, JUST STATING A FACT.

HOW'S THIS?

WELLLL...

WE LIVE IN AN APARTMENT, REMEMBER?

SAVE THE BIG ONE FOR OUR FIRST HOUSE.

I THINK IT'S SWEET.

I THINK *YOU'RE* SWEET.

I THINK... VERY NAUGHTY THOUGHTS.

OH, YEAH? LIKE...

...WHAT'S THAT?!

SOME-THING IN THE TREES.

I'LL TAKE A LOOK.

DOUG, BE CAREFUL!

RELAX, ELLIE. IT'S A FALSE ALARM, I THINK.

I'M GLAD THE MOON IS FULL. THINGS ARE LIT UP SO BRIGHT I DON'T NEED MY FLASH--

IURRRGH!

FOR DOUGLAS MOORE, DEATH IS VIRTUALLY INSTANTANEOUS.

HIS WIFE HAS TIME FOR A CHOKED CRY...

...THAT IS ENDED AS QUICKLY, AS ABRUPTLY, AS HER LIFE.

AND WHEN THE KILLING IS DONE, THE N'GARAI FEEDS...

...ON BOTH BODY AND SOUL.

THESE VICTIMS ARE BUT THE FIRST... OF MANY.

'TWAS THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS, AND ALL THROUGH THE HOUSE, THE **X-MEN** ARE STIRRING.

IT'S BEEN A QUIET MONTH SINCE THEIR BATTLE IN WASHINGTON, D.C., WITH THE NEW **BROTHERHOOD OF EVIL MUTANTS*** -- AND THEY'VE SPENT THE TIME CATCHING THEIR BREATH, HONING OLD SKILLS, LEARNING NEW ONES.

NO DAY, NO OPPORTUNITY, IS WASTED. WHICH IS WHY, EVEN ON CHRISTMAS EVE, **KITTY PRYDE** -- THE NEWEST AND YOUNGEST MEMBER OF THE TEAM -- MUST SPEND AN HOUR UNDER PROFFESSOR XAVIER'S INSTRUCTION (IN ADDITION TO HER SCHOOLWORK) LEARNING ALL THERE IS TO KNOW ABOUT THE X-MEN, THEIR ABILITIES, THEIR EQUIPMENT.

ONCE MORE, KITTY. "*BLACKBIRD*" IGNITION PROCEDURE, FROM THE BEGINNING.

Sigh.

MASTER SWITCH, ON. BRAKES, LOCKED. THROTTLES TO...

PROFESSOR, THE CAR IS READY. IT'S, ah, GETTING LATE.

*LAST ISH -- L.

CHRIS CLAREMONT - JOHN BYRNE WRITER / CO-PLOTTERS / PENCILER | **TERRY AUSTIN** INKER | TOM ORZECHOWSKI, letterer GLYNIS WEIN, colorist | **LOUISE JONES** EDITOR | **JIM SHOOTER** Ed.-in-CHIEF

HIYA, ANGEL!

TALK ABOUT YOUR TIMELY INTERRUPTIONS! I FEEL LIKE I COULD BUILD OUR BLACKBIRD JET OUT OF SPARE PARTS, WITH MY EYES CLOSED.

KITTY, I SHAN'T BE SATISFIED UNTIL YOU *CAN!*

OY!

WE ALL WENT THROUGH THIS GRINDER, KID. NOW IT'S YOUR TURN. AND THIS IS THE ***EASY*** PART.

THANK YOU, ANGEL. I'M SURE KITTY APPRECIATES SUCH ENCOURAGEMENT. WE'LL BE DOWNSTAIRS DIRECTLY.

SOON, IN THE MANSION'S FOYER...

PROF, I'D LIKE TO INTRODUCE MY, um, LADY. CHARLES XAVIER-- ***MARIKO YASHIDA.***

KOM-BAN-WA, KYOJÛ. HAJIMEMASHITE.

GOOD EVENING, PROFESSOR. I AM PLEASED TO MEET YOU.

AS AM I, MISS YASHIDA.

MARIKO!

LONG TIME, NO SEE! AND YOU LOOK AS BEAUTIFUL AS EVER!

Eh--?! *NIGHTCRAWLER-SAN!*

BACK OFF, ELF!

WHADDYA THINK YER DOIN'?! MARIKO'S *MY* LADY!

BAMF

*RETRACTABLE ADAMANTIUM CLAWS FLASH FROM THE BACKS OF WOLVERINE'S HANDS, AND ONLY NIGHTCRAWLER'S ABILITY TO **TELEPORT** SAVES HIM FROM SOME NASTY WOUNDS.*

*INSTANTLY REACTING WITH A SPEED THAT BELIES HIS MASSIVE FORM, **PETER RASPUTIN** SHIFTS TO THE ARMORED FORM OF **COLOSSUS**, AND...*

LEGGO'A'ME, YA TIN-PLATED-LUMMOX!

WOLVERINE, WHAT DO YOU THINK ***YOU*** ARE DOING?! KURT IS OUR ***FRIEND!***

WOLVERINE, SHEATHE YOUR CLAWS!

KURT MEANT NO HARM. YOU KNOW THAT. HIS WAS AN INNOCENT CHRISTMAS GREETING...

...NOT SOME ENEMY'S ATTACK!

AS ABRUPTLY AS WOLVERINE'S SUDDEN BERSERKER RAGE BEGINS, IT ENDS...

I'M OBLIGED, CHARLEY. YOUR TELEPATHIC MINDTOUCH DID THE TRICK. I'M... CALM NOW. EVERYTHING'S COOL. MISFIT-- KURT, I... I'M SORRY. I LOST MY HEAD.

I GUESS THE OLD WAYS, THE OLD HABITS, DIE A LOT HARDER'N WE FIGURED.

MINE ARE A KILLER'S INSTINCTS. ALWAYS HAVE BEEN. ALWAYS WILL BE. I THOUGHT-- I HOPED-- THAT COULD BE CHANGED.

I WAS WRONG.

THE MOOD HERE HAS GOTTEN A WEE BIT HEAVY. I DON'T KNOW IF I SHOULD, BUT I'M GONNA TRY TO LIGHTEN IT UP A LITTLE.

MERRY CHRISTMAS, SEXY.

KITTY!

PETER, YOU'RE *BLUSHING!*

GOOD THING YOU ONLY KISSED HIM ON THE CHEEK, KITTEN. ANYWHERE ELSE AND HE'D HAVE PROBABLY DROPPED DEAD FROM SHOCK.

YOU KNOW, KURT, I AM BEGINNING TO REGRET RESCUING YOU JUST NOW.

ARE YOU INDEED?

I'VE BROUGHT THE AUTOMOBILE AROUND, PROFESSOR.

THANK YOU, ORORO.

IT'S A LOVELY NIGHT, ORORO. *YOUR* DOING?

WHAT GOOD IS BEING A MUTANT "*WEATHER WITCH*" IF ONE CAN'T CONJURE UP A CRYSTAL CLEAR CHRISTMAS EVE?

WAY TO GO, ORORO!

HAVE A NICE TIME, YOU GUYS!

SEE YOU LATER, KID!

MY LADY, *CANDY SOUTHERN*, AND I HAVE A LONG OVERDUE DATE. YOU MAY NOT SEE ME AGAIN 'TIL EASTER.

ENJOY YOURSELF, ANGEL.

FINALLY, THEY'RE ALL GONE.

OMIGOSH! WHAT AM I SAYING?! THEY *ARE* ALL GONE!

I'M *ALL ALONE!*

GREAT. THE KID HERE MAY HAVE A GENIUS I.Q. BUT SHE'S ABOUT AS QUICK ON THE UPTAKE AS A CLAM.

I'VE NEVER SPENT CHANUKAH AWAY FROM HOME BEFORE. I WONDER HOW MOM AND DAD ARE DOING?

I KNOW! I'LL CALL THEM!

IT'S FUNNY. SOMETIMES, I DON'T MISS 'EM AT ALL.

SOMETIMES I *DO*.

NO ANSWER.

BRRING

THE *PHONE--!*

MOM?! *DAD?!?*

Oh, IT'S YOU. SORRY. HI, SCOTT.

THIS IS KITTY PRYDE. DO YOU REMEMBER--?

*ON THE OTHER END OF THE LINE, IN THE FLORIDA SEACOAST TOWN OF SHARK BAY, IS **SCOTT SUMMERS.** AS **CYCLOPS.** HE ONCE LED THE X-MEN -- UNTIL THE DEATH OF THE WOMAN HE LOVED, **JEAN GREY.** AFTER THAT -- DRIVEN BY NEEDS HE BARELY UNDERSTOOD AND A GRIEF ALMOST TOO TERRIBLE TO ENDURE -- HE TOOK A LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM THE TEAM.* HE'S BEEN ON THE ROAD EVER SINCE.*

OF COURSE I REMEMBER YOU, KITTY. HOW'RE THINGS?

NO ONE'S HOME BUT YOU? I... SEE.

WELL, GIVE EVERYONE MY LOVE, WISH THEM A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND TELL THEM I'LL TRY TO PHONE AGAIN TOMORROW.

'BYE, KITTY. TAKE CARE.

**IN X-MEN #138 -- L.*

POOR KID. SHE SOUNDED REALLY LONELY. I KNOW THE FEELING. I HAD TOO MANY CHRISTMASES LIKE THAT GROWING UP IN THE ORPHANAGE.

EATS

WHY'D THE OTHERS LEAVE HER, THOUGH? THAT'S NOT LIKE THE X-MEN AT ALL.

EXCUSE ME! I'M LOOKING FOR *LEE FORRESTER*-- CAPTAIN OF THE *ARCADIA*. I WAS TOLD HE WAS HIRING CREW.

I'M LEE FORRESTER -- *"ALEYTYS"* TO MY RELATIVES -- AND YOU HEARD RIGHT.

YOU'RE A *GIRL--!*

CARE TO TRY AGAIN, SPORT?

I... I'M SORRY. I MEAN, I...

APOLOGY ACCEPTED...

...SCOTT. *SCOTT SUMMERS.*

C'MON ABOARD, SCOTT. WE'LL SPLIT A POT OF COFFEE AND TALK.

MEANWHILE, BACK IN NEW YORK...

ENOUGH WITH THE MOPES, A'READY!

I'M A BIG GIRL NOW, AND WHEN BIG GIRLS-- WHO ALSO HAPPEN TO BE *X-MEN*-- FEEL AS MISERABLE AS I DO, THEY DON'T ACT SORRY FOR THEM-SELVES AND GET ALL WEEPY-WAILY.

THEY *HIT* SOME-THING.

PRIMITIVE--BUT OH SO CATHARTIC.

SINCE NO ONE'S AROUND TO MONITOR ME IN THE *DANGER ROOM*, I CAN'T RUN A COMBAT WORKOUT.

0776
DANGER ROOM
PRIMARY CYCLE
GYMNASIUM
TIME CYCLE: 60MIN

BUT I DON'T REALLY MIND.

*SHE CONCENTRATES, TRYING TO BE SERIOUS BUT UNABLE TO REPRESS A GIGGLE OF EXCITEMENT AS SHE **PHASES** THROUGH THE FLOOR OF THE CONTROL BOOTH--*

--LITERALLY FALLING THROUGH THE VAST, EMPTY SPACES BE-TWEEN ATOMS, THOSE OF HER BODY SLIDING BETWEEN THOSE OF THE METAL--

*--AND **FLOATS** DOWN TO THE FLOOR OF THE DANGER ROOM. SHE HASN'T BEEN AN X-MAN VERY LONG. SHE'S NOT USED TO HER NASCENT SUPER-POWERS, AND USING THEM STILL GIVES HER A THRILL.*

AWAITING HER IS ENOUGH EQUIPMENT TO STOCK A TOP-RATED SPA. AFTER A SERIES OF WARM-UP EXERCISES, KITTY GOES TO WORK.

ONCE UPON A TIME--TWO, THREE, FOUR-- I THOUGHT THE LIFE OF A SUPER-HERO WAS ALL FUN AND GAMES.

HAH!

NO ONE TOLD ME I'D BE SPENDING AN HOUR A DAY-- PLUS SCHOOLWORK --STUDYING.

OR ANOTHER HOUR, EVERY DAY, EXERCISING. AND THIS ISN'T JUST FOR ME, EITHER. *ALL* THE X-MEN WORK OUT. I DON'T SEE THE POINT. IT'S OUR SUPER-POWERS THAT NEED TRAININ', NOT OUR BODIES. I'M IN *GREAT* SHAPE.

THE WAY THINGS ARE GOING, I'LL PROBABLY TURN INTO A TEEN-AGE, FEMALE *ARNOLD SCHWARZE-NEGGER*.

ALLEZ-*OOP!*

OW!

BETTER EASE OFF A LITTLE. SOMETHING WENT TWINGE IN MY THIGH.

I SHOULDN'T JOKE SO MUCH ABOUT THE X-MEN. THIS ISN'T A GAME TO THEM. THEY HIDE THEIR FEELINGS AROUND ME, BUT WHENEVER THEY MENTION JEAN GREY, THEY SOUND SO... *SAD*.

SHE DIED. AS AN X-MAN.

I COULD DIE.

I WISH I'D KNOWN HER BETTER -- *HUNH?!*

BARRANG!

THAT'S THE *BURGLAR ALARM!* THE HOUSE COMPUTER SHOULD BE PRINTING OUT THE DETAILS ON THE WALL SCANSCREEN -- AH, THERE IT IS!

POSSIBLE INTRUDER ZONE 4

ZONE 4 IS UPSTAIRS-- *ORORO'S ATTIC!*

IF THERE'S AN INTRUDER WHEN I'M BY MYSELF, I'M SUPPOSED TO CALL THE POLICE, BUT I THINK I'D BETTER CHECK THINGS OUT FIRST.

I CALLED 'EM LAST SEPTEMBER DURING A BIG WINDSTORM...

...AND IT TURNED OUT TO BE A FALSE ALARM. A TREE BRANCH HAD BLOWN THROUGH THE SKYLIGHT. THE COPS TOOK IT IN STRIDE BUT I FELT LIKE A JERK.

THIS TIME I'M GOING TO MAKE SURE!

RUNNING UP AIR MOLECULES IS A LOT MORE FUN THAN WALKING UP STAIRS!

EVEN IF I *DO* FIND A BURGLAR, THERE'S NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT. WITH MY PHASING POWER, THERE'S *NO WAY* I CAN BE HARMED.

GEE -- IT'S GOTTEN AWFUL *COLD* ALL OF A SUDDEN.

AND *NO WONDER!* MY COSTUME'S INSULATED, AND I CAN *STILL* FEEL THE COLD. ICICLE CITY.

OH, NO! ORORO'S FLOWERS!

THEY'RE ALL DEAD, POOR THINGS. BUT--THIS ISN'T RIGHT. GRANTED, THIS ATTIC WAS LIKE A HOTHOUSE AND THE WINTER AIR OUTSIDE WILL KILL THE PLANTS BUT...NOT SO QUICKLY. SO COMPLETELY!

YUCK!

WHAT THE HECK IS *THIS?!*

THE FLOOR'S *COVERED* WITH THIS GOOP!

THAT SOUND--! SOMEONE'S IN HERE! BUT *WHO--?!*

NOT "WHO", KITTY -- WHAT!

NO!

THE DEMON LUNGES, EAGER TO CLAIM THIS NEW, SUCCULENT PREY...

YOW!

... BUT KITTY IS TOO FAST FOR IT. SHE PHASES THROUGH THE FLOOR...

... HOPING IT WILL SHIELD HER FROM HER UNHUMAN PURSUER.

SHE HOPES IN VAIN.

CRIPES, THAT THING IS AS STRONG AS IT IS UGLY. AND ITS CLAWS ARE AS RAZOR- SHARP AS WOLVERINE'S!

I DON'T WANT TO THINK ABOUT *WHY.*

BUT WHERE DID IT COME FROM?! WHAT THE BLAZES *IS* IT?!

WHAT'S IT DOING *HERE*?!?

IT'S OBVIOUS WHAT IT'S AFTER... *ME!*

IT'S DETERMINED, I'LL GIVE IT THAT. THE MANSION'S WALLS ARE SPECIALLY REENFORCED AND THEY DON'T EVEN SLOW IT DOWN.

SHE RUNS.

BUT WHEREVER SHE GOES, THE DEMON FOLLOWS, HOT ON HER HEELS.

I CAN'T KEEP THIS UP FOREVER. THAT THING'LL TRASH THE ENTIRE HOUSE. I CAN'T RUN FOR HELP, EITHER. IT COULD GET AWAY OR, WORSE, WAIT FOR THE POLICE TO SHOW UP AND THEN TEAR *THEM* APART.

FIGHTING IT WON'T BE EASY, THOUGH. PHYSICALLY, I'M HOPELESSLY OUTMATCHED.

BUT I HAVE A BRAIN. PERHAPS I CAN OUTWIT IT.

I NEED TO LEARN HOW SMART THAT THING IS. I'VE PULLED A LITTLE BIT AHEAD OF IT.

I'LL DUCK DOWN THIS STAIRWAY AND THEN, WHILE I'M MOMENTARILY OUT OF SIGHT...

...*PHASE* THROUGH THE STAIRS INTO THE STORAGE CLOSET UNDERNEATH. MY SCENT WILL SIMPLY DISAPPEAR IN MID-AIR. EVEN WOLVERINE'S SUPER-SENSITIVE NOSE WOULD HAVE A HARD TIME PICKING ME OUT OF ALL THE OTHER ODORS IN HERE.

THE MONSTER WILL HAVE TO *DEDUCE* WHAT I'VE DONE. THE QUESTION IS: CAN IT DO THAT?

I CAN'T HEAR ANYTHING. MY PLOY WORKED. NEXT I'LL PHASE THROUGH THE FLOOR INTO THE CLOSET BELOW--THE ONE THAT'S NEXT TO THE PHONE!

IF THIS WAS A MOVIE, THE MONSTER WOULD BE WAITING RIGHT OUTSIDE THE DOOR, READY TO BITE MY HEAD OFF THE MOMENT I SHOW MYSELF.

ISN'T THAT A CHEERY THOUGHT? WELL, HERE GOES NOTHIN'!

I DON'T BELIEVE I'M TAKING THIS SO MUCH IN STRIDE. I'M SCARED, YET... I'M COPING.

I'M OUT, AND SO FAR, I'M SAFE. ALL I NEED ARE A FEW SECONDS' GRACE, TO CALL THE PROFESSOR ON THE ROLLS' CAR-PHONE AND I FIGURE I'M HOME FREE.

X-MEN TO THE RESCUE. BYE-BYE BEASTIE.

OH--NO!

THE DEMON TIMES ITS ATTACK PERFECTLY, SMASHING THROUGH THE DOOR BEHIND HER. BEFORE SPRITE CAN MOVE, MUCH LESS ESCAPE...

*...ITS CLAWS RIP THROUGH HER. SHE **SCREAMS**--*

--BUT DOES NOT DIE.

I--***FELT*** THAT! I... MANAGED TO PHASE THE INSTANT BEFORE IT HIT ME, BUT ITS ATTACK STILL HURT. HURT--***HAH!*** I'VE... NEVER FELT SUCH ***AGONY.***

MY RIGHT ARM'S NUMB, FROZEN--***USELESS!***

SOMEHOW, THAT CREATURE CAN REACH ME-- HURT ME--EVEN IN MY EPHEMERAL STATE. THIS CHANGES EVERYTHING.

MY GUTS FEEL LIKE THEY'VE BEEN TWISTED INSIDE-OUT. I FEEL SICK--PHYSICALLY AND PSYCHICALLY. IT'S AN EFFORT JUST TO STAY ON MY FEET.

DANGER ROOM INACTIVE

I CAN'T LET IT TOUCH ME AGAIN.

IT'S ***SMART***, TOO. IT ANTICIPATED MY MOVE AND TURNED THE TABLES ON ME. I DAREN'T UNDER-ESTIMATE IT A SECOND TIME.

I CAN'T CALL FOR HELP. I CAN'T RUN. I'VE NO ALTERNATIVE.

I HAVE TO FIGHT IT--AND BEAT IT-- ON MY OWN.

I'LL MAKE MY STAND HERE IN THE ***DANGER ROOM***. MY TRAIL WILL LEAD IT INSIDE.

ONCE MORE USING HER PHASING ABILITY TO LITERALLY WALK ON INDIVIDUAL MOLECULES OF AIR, KITTY ASCENDS FROM THE FLOOR TO THE CONTROL BOOTH.

I'LL PROGRAM THE MOST DANGEROUS SEQUENCES POSSIBLE--BLAST! I'M NOT USED TO DOING THIS ONE-HANDED. THIS IS HARDER THAN I THOUGHT. IT'S TAKING SO LONG-- TOO LONG.

12

22

0678
0779
0976

THE SYSTEM HAS BUILT-IN SAFETY INTERLOCKS, TO PREVENT ANYONE FROM BEING SERIOUSLY INJURED. BUT IF I HIT THE MONSTER OFTEN ENOUGH, WITH EVERYTHING THE ROOM HAS, I THINK I CAN KNOCK IT SILLY!

AT THE VERY LEAST, THIS SHOULD KEEP IT OCCUPIED LONG ENOUGH FOR ME TO CONTACT THE PROFESSOR.

935

THERE. IT'S ALL SET. THE ONLY THING MISSING IS MY MONSTER. THAT SUCKER'S SURE TAKING ITS TIME.

Oh. SUPPOSE IT SUSPECTS A TRAP? THAT'S RIDICULOUS. THERE'S NO REASON WHY IT SHOULD. WHEN LAST IT SAW ME, I WAS CRIPPLED AND ON THE RUN.

UNLESS... IT ISN'T MERELY SMART, IT'S ***REAL*** SMART.

CRASH!

I THINK I JUST GOT MY ANSWER.

KITTY DIVES BACKWARDS, PHASING THROUGH THE FACE OF THE BOOTH.

THE DEMON CHARGES AFTER HER...

... SHATTERING THE ARMORED, SUPPOSEDLY UNBREAKABLE GLASS WITH TERRIFYING EASE, LEAVING SHATTERED, SAVAGED COMPUTERS SHORT-CIRCUITING IN ITS WAKE.

AS KITTY LANDS, SHE FEELS THE ROOM COME TO LIFE AROUND HER.

THE DEMON CLOSES IN FOR THE KILL, BELIEVING IT HAS HER CORNERED...

... AND THEN IT IS THE N'GARAI'S TURN TO YOWL IN SURPRISE AND PAIN AS THE TRAP SO CAREFULLY LAID BY KITTY...

... IS SPRUNG!

NAILED THE CREEP!

BUT, ALTHOUGH STAGGERED BY THE MULTIPLE ASSAULTS, THE DEMON IS FAR FROM BEATEN.

IT'S RIPPING UP THE FLOOR!

BAD MOVE, UGLY. REACTING THAT WAY IS SURE TO THROW THE DANGER ROOM SYSTEMS OUT OF CONTROL AND CANCEL THE SAFETY INTERLOCKS.

UNFORTUNATELY, WHEN THE DEVICES IN HERE RUN WILD, THEY CAN NOT ONLY KILL *YOU*...

...THEY CAN KILL *ME*, AS WELL.

MY PHASING ABILITY WILL PROTECT ME FROM THE MECHANICAL THREATS. I'LL SIMPLY SLIP RIGHT THROUGH 'EM. I'LL BE LESS ABLE TO HANDLE GAS OR SONIC ATTACKS, OR THE HALLUCINOGENIC LIGHTSHOWS.

AND, AT THE SAME TIME, I'VE GOT TO STAY AWAY FROM THE CREATURE. I DIDN'T EXPECT TO BE HERE WITH IT WHEN THE ROOM ACTIVATED. I THOUGHT I'D BE WATCHING FROM THE SAFETY OF THE BOOTH.

BUT PERHAPS I CAN TURN THAT TO MY ADVANTAGE. THE MONSTER SEEMS PREPARED TO ENDURE ANYTHING TO GET ME. I CAN LEAD IT INTO THE WORST OF THE ASSAULT SYSTEMS.

THEY SHOULDN'T AFFECT ME, BUT THEY OUGHT TO CAUSE MY MONSTER A WHOLE LOT OF PROBLEMS. *FATAL* ONES, I HOPE.

WHUNFFF!

I WAS SAYING--!

A FORCE FIELD WALL! IT'S A RANDOM ENERGY PATTERN. IT'LL TAKE CONCENTRATION TO PHASE THROUGH IT...

...AND THAT KIND OF TIME...

I ...SIMPLY DO NOT HAVE.

DOESN'T THIS WALKING HORROR EVER SLOW UP?! I'M PUSHING MYSELF AS HARD AS I CAN, AND I'M BARELY STAYING AHEAD OF IT.

THE MONSTER'S GETTING MAD-- AND I'M GETTING *TIRED*.

OOOO

I ONLY NEED A COUPLE OF MINUTES -- TO GET MY SECOND WIND -- BUT I DOUBT I'M GONNA GET 'EM. MY INITIAL ADRENALIN HIGH IS STARTING TO WEAR OFF. I'M SLOWING DOWN.

NOW, I UNDERSTAND ABOUT THOSE DARN EXERCISES. TO SURVIVE THE KINDS OF FOES THE X-MEN FIGHT, YOU HAVE TO BE BETTER THAN THE BEST. SUPER-POWERS ALONE AREN'T ALWAYS ENOUGH TO DO THE TRICK. THEY HAVE TO BE COUPLED WITH A STRONG, WELL-HONED BODY AND MIND.

I DON'T BELIEVE IT. THIS MONSTER'S ***WRECKED*** THE DANGER ROOM. BUT WAS IT HURT IN THE PROCESS?! I DON'T KNOW. IT'S SO HARD TO TELL. THE MONSTER'S SCREAMING, BUT IS THAT PAIN OR RAGE? OR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT?!

IT'S STILL AFTER ME, AS EAGERLY AS EVER.

I CAN'T SLACKEN MY PACE -- NOT YET -- NO MATTER HOW MUCH I WANT TO. I'VE COME TOO FAR -- FOUGHT TOO HARD -- TO GIVE UP NOW. OR LOSE.

I'VE MADE MY LAST MISTAKE, TOO.

I CAN'T AFFORD ANOTHER. I'VE NO MORE MARGIN FOR ERROR. IF I FOUL UP AGAIN -- IF I GUESS WRONG -- I'M ***DEAD.***

"DEAD." NOT THE SORT OF THING YOUR TYPICAL HEALTHY THIRTEEN YEAR OLD IS SUPPOSED TO THINK ABOUT. I DON'T WANT TO DIE.

HANGAR OPEN
LT 196

THAT'S SCARY. BUT WHAT'S MORE SCARY IS THE THOUGHT THAT IF THAT THING KILLS ME, THERE'LL BE NO ONE TO WARN THE X-MEN OF THE MONSTER'S EXISTENCE. IT'LL CATCH THEM OFF-GUARD WHEN THEY RETURN HOME. THEY'LL BE SLAUGHTERED!

IN THE DANGER ROOM, IT ALMOST CAUGHT ME, BUT *FIRE* FORCED IT AWAY. IS IT VULNERABLE TO INTENSE HEAT? TOO BAD I DON'T HAVE SOME KING-SIZED *FLAME-THROWERS* HANDY!

THEY USED *THEM* TO FIGHT THE MONSTER IN THAT *MOVIE!* IT DIDN'T WORK, THOUGH--

--BUT I REMEMBER WHAT *DID!* OH *BOY!* I JUST HOPE IT WORKS AS WELL FOR *ME!*

THE UNDERGROUND HANGAR COMPLEX IS A MILE FROM THE MANSION, CONNECTED BY A HIGH-SPEED SUBWAY. THIS MONOCAR CAN MAKE IT IN LESS THAN A MINUTE.

BUT, THOUGH IT DOESN'T SEEM LIKE MUCH...

...A MINUTE CAN SOMETIMES BE A ***VERY*** LONG TIME.

KITTY HASN'T EVEN GONE HALFWAY...

...BEFORE THE DEMON DERAILS HER MONOCAR.

SHE FINISHES THE JOURNEY ON FOOT-- NINE HUNDRED METERS IN THREE MINUTES*-- IGNORING THE WHITE HOT POKERS STABBING THROUGH HER CHEST WITH EVERY GASPING BREATH, AND THE BLINDING SHARDS OF PAIN FROM HER LEFT KNEE THAT REDUCE HER TO A HOBBLE BY THE TIME SHE REACHES THE HANGAR.

*1 METER= 3.3 FEET--*L.*

THERE, IN THE LAUNCH BAY-- ON THE ELEVATOR THAT LIFTS IT TO THE SURFACE FOR TAKE-OFF-- SITS THE X-MEN'S MODIFIED ***SR-71 BLACKBIRD.*** PROBABLY THE MOST POWERFUL AIRCRAFT ON EARTH, IT IS CAPABLE OF CIRCLING THE GLOBE WITHOUT REFUELING, OR SOARING TO THE EDGE OF SPACE, OF FLYING AT HYPERSONIC SPEEDS, OVER FIVE TIMES THE SPEED OF SOUND.

IF THE MONSTER WANTS ME, IT'LL HAVE TO COME DOWN THE TRANSIT TUNNEL. THERE'S NO OTHER ENTRANCE TO THE HANGAR COMPLEX FROM THE MANSION.

THE HANGAR IS CONSTRUCTED OF STEEL AND CONCRETE--A COUPLE OF METERS THICK. EVEN THAT CREATURE WOULD HAVE A HARD TIME DIGGING ITS WAY IN HERE.

I'M COUNTING ON IT BEING TOO ANGRY TO TRY...

...OR WANTING ME SO BADLY THAT IT'LL FOLLOW THE PATH OF LEAST RESISTANCE. CERTAIN THAT I CAN DO NOTHING TO DESTROY IT.

SUPPOSE IT'S RIGHT?

I DON'T SEE IT YET, IN THE TAIL CAMERA. NOW TO RUN THROUGH THE IGNITION CHECK LIST. PLEASE, LORD, DON'T LET ME FORGET ANYTHING.

MASTER SWITCH, ON. INTERNAL POWER, ON. BRAKES, LOCKED. FUEL PUMPS, ON. WHAT'S NEXT? I... I -- *DON'T KNOW!*

THINK! *THINK!*

"IT'S COMING!

"WHAT'LL I DO?!

STOP IT!

RELAX! RELAX. DEEP BREATH. CALM, STAY CALM.

DON'T RUSH. TAKE YOUR TIME.

"EVERY-THING'LL BE ALL RIGHT.

WAIT!

THE BLACKBIRD'S ON A TURNTABLE. I CAN FOLLOW THE MONSTER ANYWHERE INSIDE THE LAUNCH BAY.

BUT I HAVE TO WAIT 'TIL THE LAST POSSIBLE INSTANT-- 'TIL IT'S RIGHT ON TOP OF ME. THAT'S THE SPIRIT, YOU SLIMY HORROR, YOU.

COME TO KITTY. JUST A LITTLE CLOSER, SUCKER, A COUPLE OF MORE LOUSY STEPS...

GOT YOU!

TWO ENGINES, EACH RATED AT TWENTY THOUSAND KILOGRAMS OF THRUST, FLARE TO LIFE AT THE TOUCH OF A BUTTON. THEY'RE AT FULL EMERGENCY POWER, AFTERBURNERS PUNCHING TWIN PILLARS OF FLAME FROM THE HUGE EXHAUSTS.

FROM BEHIND THE BLACK-BIRD, IT'S LIKE SUDDENLY FINDING ONESELF TRANS-PORTED TO THE GATES OF HELL, OR PLUNGED INTO THE HEART OF A STAR.

A HOWLING BASSO ROAR FILLS THE HANGAR, AS AWESOME IN ITS OWN WAY AS THE ENGINES' FIRE. THE ENGINES WERE NEVER MEANT TO BE FIRED UNDERGROUND -- AND ESPECIALLY NOT AT MAXIMUM THRUST.

THEY CREATE BLAST WAVES THAT SHAKE THE COMPLEX LIKE A SMALL EARTHQUAKE.

METAL -- STRESSED BEYOND ENDURANCE -- BENDS, SHRIEKS. TELLTALES IN THE COCKPIT FLASH URGENT WARNINGS. KITTY IGNORES THEM UNTIL FINALLY, WITH AN ALMOST HUMAN SCREAM, THE LANDING GEAR BUCKLES AND THE BLACKBIRD HURLS ITSELF FORWARD ACROSS THE LAUNCH BAY, INTO THE FAR WALL.

THEN, AND ONLY THEN -- AS SHE FEELS THE UNDERCARRIAGE COLLAPSE -- DOES KITTY SHUT DOWN THE ENGINES, FLOODING THEM WITH FOAM TO PREVENT A FIRE. THE SILENCE IS DEAFENING.

I'M... SORRY, BLACKBIRD. I WISH I COULD'VE THOUGHT OF ANOTHER WAY.

KOFF! KOFF!

I MUST'VE KAYOED THE AIR CYCLERS. THE HANGAR IS SO THICK WITH SMOKE I CAN HARDLY SEE.

THE AUTOMATIC SPRINKLERS HAVE MALFUNCTIONED, TOO. I'LL HAVE TO ACTIVATE THEM MANUALLY.

I'D BETTER WALK ON AIR. THINGS ARE STILL BURNING. AND THE FLOOR'S SO HOT I CAN FEEL IT THROUGH THE SOLES OF MY INSULATED BOOTS.

WHERE'S THE MONSTER?! DID I KILL IT?!?

I HAD TO. NOTHING COULD HAVE SURVIVED THIS HOLOCAUST. *NOTHING!*

SHE HAS TIME TO SCREAM.

IT'S MIDNIGHT BEFORE PROFESSOR XAVIER'S ROLLS-ROYCE RETURNS TO THE MANSION. ICY ROADS AND AIR-PORT TRAFFIC JAMS CAUSED EXPECTED DELAYS. AN **UNEXPECTED** OBSTACLE WAS A POLICE ROADBLOCK IN SALEM CENTER.

THERE HAD BEEN A SERIES OF GRUESOME MURDERS NEARBY EARLIER THIS EVENING, THE LAST UNCOMFORT-ABLY CLOSE TO XAVIER'S SCHOOL.

THE POLICE WERE ALERTING ALL THE LOCAL RESIDENTS, AS WELL AS CHECKING ALL STRANGERS PASSING THROUGH TOWN.

NO LIGHTS, PROFESSOR. THAT COULD MEAN NOTHING. IT IS LATE. KITTY COULD HAVE GONE TO BED.

PERHAPS, PETER. BUT THERE IS A MIASMA OF **EVIL** ABOUT THE HOUSE...

...THAT INHIBITS MY TELEPATHIC ABILITIES. CHECK INSIDE. ORORO, STAY HERE TO PROTECT THE CAR.

THIS IS STRANGE.

IT IS SIGNIFICANTLY COLDER ***INSIDE*** THE HOUSE THAN OUTSIDE.

I SWEAR I'VE SENSED THIS PARTICULAR EVIL BEFORE, BUT FOR THE LIFE OF ME, I CAN'T REMEMBER WHEN. IT'S INFURIATING.

ALL SEEMS PEACEFUL, PROFESSOR.

WAIT! I HEAR THE TELEVISION. SOMEONE MUST BE IN THE LIVING ROOM.

KITTY!

Yawn!

Hmh... ??? OH -- HI, PETER.

PETER!!

WAIT'LL YOU HEAR WHAT HAPPENED TONIGHT! YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW HAPPY I AM TO SEE YOU!

OH, ***WOW!*** OH, THANK HEAVENS! IT'S ***YOU!***

KITTY... PLEASE...

IF YOU'RE HAPPY TO SEE PETER, KITTEN, HOW D'YOU FEEL ABOUT US?

MOM!!

DAD!!

YOU GREW A ***BEARD!***

SHORTLY...

I'M SO GLAD YOU BOTH COULD MAKE THE TRIP, CARMEN. YOUR PRESENCE HAS DONE WONDERS FOR KITTY'S MORALE.

CHARLES, TO BE HONEST, YOU COULDN'T HAVE KEPT US AWAY. I DIDN'T REALIZE I'D--***WE'D***--MISS OUR KITTEN SO MUCH. OUR VISIT--YOUR SPECIAL CHANUKAH SURPRISE--IS AS MUCH A GIFT TO US AS TO HER.

KITTY, I'VE JUST BEEN UP-STAIRS TO MY ATTIC.

Uh-oh.

WHAT PRECISELY ***HAPPENED*** WHILE WE WERE GONE?!

I WAS ATTACKED BY A BIG, UGLY MONSTER.

A--MONSTER?!

ORORO, YOU HAD TO SEE IT TO BELIEVE IT. WE FOUGHT. I GOT LUCKY. I WON.

BUT, IN THE PROCESS, WE KIND'A WRECKED THE DANGER ROOM.

"***WRECKED...THE DANGER ROOM?!***"

AND THE BLACKBIRD. AND THE HANGAR. AND A LOT OF THE HOUSE.

OH. MY.

ARE YOU ANGRY?

I'M NOT QUITE SURE. BUT FROM THE SOUND OF THINGS, I'M FAIRLY CERTAIN I SHOULD FEEL TERRIBLY ***PROUD*** OF YOU.

GEE.

IT HAD BEEN THE CLOSEST OF CLOSE CALLS. SHE WAS TOO TIRED AND TOO SCARED TO PHASE WHEN THE DEMON REACHED FOR HER.

IT COULD HAVE KILLED HER, HAD IT GOT ITS HANDS ON HER.

BUT IT WAS DYING ON ITS FEET, ITS UNEARTHLY FORM CRUMBLING INTO DUST WITH EVERY STEP.

IT TRIED. IT MADE A SUPREME EFFORT. IT FAILED.

*ALONE, ON CHRISTMAS EVE, KITTY PRYDE UNDERWENT A **RITE OF PASSAGE**--*

-- A SUPREME TEST OF HER ABILITIES, HER INTELLECT, HER COURAGE, HER... SELF.

SHE PASSED.

NEXT

THE RETURN OF CYCLOPS!

APR #144 50¢

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THE UNCANNY X-MEN™

TM

CRY... D'SPAYRE!

GUEST STARRING THE MACABRE MAN-THING!

Cyclops. Storm. Nightcrawler. Wolverine. Colossus. Children of the atom, students of Charles Xavier, MUTANTS — feared and hated by the world they have sworn to protect. These are the STRANGEST heroes of all!

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE UNCANNY X-MEN!™

CHRIS CLAREMONT WRITER | BRENT ANDERSON, GUEST PENCILER JOSEF RUBENSTEIN, INKER | GLYNIS WEIN, colorist TOM ORZECHOWSKI, letterer | LOUISE JONES EDITOR | JIM SHOOTER Ed.-IN-CHIEF

Even in Death...

THE DOCTOR WAS HONEST, AND AS GENTLE AS A PERSON CAN BE WHEN SHE TELLS AN OLD FRIEND THAT HE'S GOING TO DIE.

DIAGNOSIS: CANCER -- INOPERABLE, INCURABLE. PROGNOSIS: EVER-INCREASING ENFEEBLEMENT OF PHYSICAL AND MENTAL FACULTIES, EVER-INCREASING PAIN, DEATH WITHIN A YEAR.

FROM THE HOSPITAL, JOCK FORRESTER CAME HERE TO THE SWAMP HE'D KNOWN AND LOVED SINCE CHILDHOOD, TO MAKE THE MOST IMPORTANT DECISION OF HIS LIFE: TO FIGHT THIS DISEASE -- AND PRAY THAT SOME MIRACLE MIGHT SAVE HIM -- OR END THINGS, QUICKLY, CLEANLY, IN HIS OWN WAY, HIS OWN TIME.

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JOCK DOES NOT REALIZE THAT, THE MOMENT HE ENTERED THIS GLADE, HIS DECISION WAS MADE **FOR** HIM.

Ah, MARY MY DARLING, WHY COULDN'T I HAVE DIED WITH YOU? I WANTED TO.

WHY NOW, LORD? WHY...THIS WAY? IT... IT'S SO UNFAIR!

NEARBY, UNNOTICED IN THE SHADOWS, SOMETHING STIRS. ONCE, THIS WAS A BIOLOGIST NAMED **TED SALLIS...**

...TRANSFORMED BY A FREAK ACCIDENT INTO A MINDLESS, MISSHAPEN MOCKERY OF HUMANITY CALLED THE **MAN-THING.**

HE IS AN EMPATH.

HE RESPONDS TO THE EMOTIONAL RESONANCES OF THE BEINGS AROUND HIM. NEGATIVE -- AND VIOLENT -- EMOTIONS CAUSE HIM PAIN...FEAR, THE WORST PAIN OF ALL. DRAWN BY JOCK'S SORROW, HE MEANS TO END IT -- IF NECESSARY, BY DESTROYING THE SOURCE.

BUT, AS HE APPROACHES THE MAN, HIS ATTENTION IS SNAGGED BY A PATCH OF OILY BLACK SMOKE SWIRLING ACROSS THE GROUND.

ITS TENDRILS REACH TOWARDS JOCK -- THE ELDRITCH CLOUD RADIATING AN ALMOST PALPABLE AURA OF EVIL --

--AND THE MAN RESPONDS.

SKRIK!

KLATCH!

DO IT, HUMAN!

YES! DO IT!

LEE... I...

BLAM!

TRIUMPHANT, MALEFIC LAUGHTER FILLS THE GLADE-- SILENCING EVERY LIVING THING WITHIN EARSHOT--

--AS THE DARKLING CLOUD FLOWS CARRESSINGLY OVER, AND THROUGH, JOCK FORRESTER'S BODY, BEFORE FINALLY COALESCING INTO THE FORM OF...

...D'SPAYRE!

HE IS A DEMON, THE EMBODIMENT OF THE ULTIMATE EVIL.

HIS MERE PRESENCE FLAYS THE QUAG-BEAST WITH WHITE-HOT LASHES OF PSYCHIC ENERGY...

...AND GOADS HIM TO INSTANT, MURDEROUS ACTION.

MAN-THING!

WHAT A PLEASANT SURPRISE!

FOOL!

HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN HOW I ALMOST DESTROYED YOU WHEN LAST WE MET?*

*IN MARVEL TEAM-UP #68 --LOUISE.

WHATEVER KNOWS FEAR **BURNS** AT THE MAN-THING'S TOUCH...

...AND D'SPAYRE CAN MAKE YOU FEEL ABSOLUTE **TERROR!**

INSTANTLY, IMPOSSIBLY, THE MUCK-MONSTER EXPLODES INTO FLAMES.

BURN, CREATURE -- **BURN!** I THRIVE ON YOUR PAIN!

YOUR DEATH, AND THAT OF JOCK FORRESTER -- WHOSE FORM I NOW TAKE -- ARE BUT THE FIRST OF MANY.

I FEED ON LIVING SOULS, MAN-BRUTE. AND MY HUNGER IS **INSATIABLE!**

MIDWAY DOWN THE WEST COAST OF FLORIDA, IS THE FISHING PORT OF **SHARK BAY.** AND TIED UP TO THE CANNERY WHARF, THIS FINE WINTER AFTERNOON, IS THE TRAWLER, ARCADIA.

SHE'S BEEN AT SEA A MONTH, SCOURING THE GULF AND ATLANTIC FISHING GROUNDS, AND SHE'S RETURNED WITH A FULL HOLD -- A MOST SUCCESSFUL TRIP.

THAT'S NOT SURPRISING. ARCADIA'S A FINE SHIP, SKIPPERED BY **ALEYTYS FORRESTER** -- JOCK'S ONLY CHILD -- ONE OF THE BEST CAPTAINS ON THE COAST, AND HER CREW IS SUPERB.

THE LATEST ADDITION TO THAT CREW IS **SCOTT SUMMERS** --

--WHO, UNTIL RECENTLY, WAS ALSO KNOWN AS **CYCLOPS**, LEADER OF THAT TEAM OF MUTANT SUPER-HEROES, THE **X-MEN.**

AFTER THE DEATH OF HIS BELOVED **JEAN GREY**, SCOTT TOOK A LEAVE OF ABSENCE. SIX WEEKS AGO, HIS WANDERINGS BROUGHT HIM TO SHARK BAY. ON IMPULSE, HE SIGNED ABOARD ARCADIA. HE HASN'T REGRETTED IT.

BUT, THOUGH HE'S WORKED AS LONG AND HARD AS ANY OF HIS FELLOW CREWMEN, HE STILL FEELS LIKE AN OUTSIDER, A STRANGER.

HEY, SCOTTY, HOW COME -- RAIN OR SHINE, NIGHT OR DAY -- YOU ALWAYS WEAR THEM SHADES?

DOCTOR'S ORDERS, PAOLO.

MY EYES... ARE UNUSUALLY SENSITIVE TO LIGHT.

NO KIDDIN'!

IT'S ALMOST DARK. MIND IF I TAKE A GANDER AT YOUR GLASSES? I NEVER SEEN LENSES LIKE YOURS.

KEEP AWAY!

THESE RUBY QUARTZ LENSES ARE THE ONLY THING THAT KEEP MY DEADLY *OPTIC BLASTS* IN CHECK.

TOUCHY, AIN'T'CHA, SON.

SEEMS TO ME YOU NEED TO BE TAKEN DOWN A PEG OR THREE -- AN I'M JUST THE MAN TO DO IT!

PAOLO, PLEASE -- I DON'T WANT A FIGHT.

HEY! BREAK IT UP, YOU TWO -- *NOW!*

I WAS JUST ASKIN' THE KID A CIVIL QUESTION, LEE. I DIDN'T MEAN NO HARM. I SURE WEREN'T LOOKIN' FER NO SCRAP.

WHY'D YOU HIRE HIM, ANYWAY?

'CAUSE HE'S *BEAUTIFUL*, PAOLO, AN' I'M TIRED OF SEEING NOTHING BUT YOU GUYS' UGLY MUGS.

SHAKE HANDS, BOTH OF YOU, AND GET BACK TO WORK. WE'VE GOT A BOAT TO UNLOAD.

HA HA HA HA HA HA

I'M SORRY, KID.

ME, TOO, PAOLO.

LATER... WE'RE HEADING FOR THE "SHANTY" FOR FOOD AND BEER. INTERESTED?

WELL...

CONSIDER IT AN ORDER, SCOTT, CAPTAIN TO CREW. IT'LL DO YOU SOME GOOD TO UNWIND.

AND SO, SCOTT MAKES HIS RELUCTANT WAY TO THE LOCAL TAVERN, WHERE HE AND HIS CREWMATES CONSUME ONE OF THE FINEST SEAFOOD DINNERS HE'S EVER TASTED.

LEE? YER DAD PHONED, SAID TO CALL HIM BACK, PRONTO.

THANKS, EARL.

I WASN'T KIDDING--SCOTT *IS* BEAUTIFUL. STRONG, GENTLE--YET HURTING DEEP INSIDE. I LIKE HIM A LOT--MAYBE TOO MUCH.

BUT THEN, I ALWAYS WAS A SUCKER FOR A BIRD WITH A BROKEN WING.

LETTERS FROM HOME. SUCH PROSAIC THINGS. YET SO IMPORTANT TO ME. THE X-MEN ARE MY FAMILY. NO MATTER WHERE I GO, WHAT I DO, I'LL NEVER BREAK THE TIES THAT BIND US.

THEY HAD AN EVENTFUL CHRISTMAS, I SEE. ***KITTY PRYDE*** -- ***SPRITE*** -- SINGLE-HANDEDLY DEFEATED SOME SORT OF HORRIBLE MONSTER. AND IN THE PROCESS, DARN NEAR TOTALED THE MANSION.*

OUCH!

*FOR DETAILS, SEE LAST ISH --LOUISE.

ON THAT NOTE, LET'S SEGUE UP THE COAST TO ***PROFESSOR CHARLES XAVIER'S SCHOOL FOR GIFTED YOUNGSTERS***, JUST OUTSIDE NEW YORK CITY...

...WHERE THE X-MEN...

...ARE DOING THEIR BEST TO REPAIR THE DAMAGE DONE BY SPRITE'S EPIC BATTLE. ***STORM*** -- CYCLOPS' REPLACEMENT AS TEAM LEADER -- USES HER ELEMENTAL WEATHER POWERS TO MANIFEST A WIND THAT SWEEPS A LOAD OF DEBRIS INTO A DUMPSTER...

...WHILE ***WOLVERINE*** USES HIS RETRACTABLE ADAMANTIUM CLAWS...

...TO CUT A RUINED PIECE OF EQUIPMENT DOWN TO SIZE.

WE'VE BEEN AT THIS FER FLAMIN' WEEKS, AN' THE DANGER ROOM -- THE WHOLE MANSION -- IS AS MESSY AS EVER. HOW COULD ONE CUTE KID CAUSE SO MUCH DAMAGE?!

STORM, I'VE FINISHED WELDING.

THANK YOU, NIGHTCRAWLER.

ANGEL!

≡ UGH! ≤ I WISH KURT COULD ELIMINATE THE DISTINCTIVE BRIMSTONE STENCH THAT SURROUNDS HIM WHEN HE TELE-PORTS. THE SMELL IS AWFUL.

GOTTA FLY, TROOPS! PROFESSOR XAVIER'S SUMMONING ME TELEPATHICALLY!

PROBLEMS, PROFESSOR?

I'VE BEEN TOTALING THE RECONSTRUCTION COSTS FOR THE DANGER ROOM, THE HANGAR, THE "*BLACKBIRD*" AIRCRAFT, THE MANSION ITSELF. THEY ARE... CONSIDERABLE.

IF YOU NEED MONEY, SIR, ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS ASK.

I APPRECIATE THAT, WARREN. I'M GLAD I CAN COUNT ON YOU.

MEANWHILE, DOWNSTAIRS...

YIKES!

OMIGOSH! IT'S-- *HER!* THE TINY TEEN TERROR!

YOU GUYS HAVE BEEN WORKING ALL DAY. I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT LIKE SOME SANDWICHES.

THAT WAS VERY THOUGHT-FUL OF YOU, KITTY.

SHE LOOKS MISERABLE. NIGHT-CRAWLER AND WOLVERINE ARE MERELY JOKING, BUT KITTY IS TAKING THEM SERIOUSLY.

DO NOT LISTEN TO THEM, LITTLE ONE. TACT -- AND GOOD TASTE -- WERE NEVER THEIR STRONG SUITS.

'S'OKAY, COLOSSUS. I CAN TAKE IT.

YOU CAN CERTAINLY DISH IT OUT, *LEIBCHIN.*

NO FOOLIN'! 'COURSE, WE'LL HAVETA DEDUCT THE DAMAGES FROM YER ALLOWANCE. YOU SHOULD HAVE THINGS PAID OFF...

...IN FOUR OR FIVE *CENTURIES!*

I'M SORRY, WOLVERINE! I DID MY BEST! I DIDN'T MEAN TO SMASH EVERYTHING!

MAYBE I SHOULD HAVE LET THAT MONSTER KILL ME!!

WITH A HEARTFELT SOB, KITTY PHASES THROUGH THE DANGER ROOM WALL--

--THROUGH THE WALLS OF THE HOUSE ITSELF--TO MAKE HER SLOW, MISERABLE WAY DOWN TO THE LAKESHORE BEHIND THE MANSION.

≥Sniff?!≤

I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT BE COLD.

BRIM-STONE?!

I BROUGHT YOUR PARKA.

NIGHT-CRAWLER!

THANKS.

LOOK, D'YOU MIND LEAVING ME ALONE? I DON'T FEEL MUCH LIKE COMPANY AT THE MOMENT.

I UNDERSTAND. FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH, I'M SORRY. WOLVERINE, ALSO.

WE NEVER MEANT TO HURT YOU, KITTY.

'S'OKAY. I KNOW. I'M NOT HURT.

IN TRUTH, WE ALL COULDN'T BE MORE PROUD OF THE WAY YOU HANDLED YOURSELF. NONE OF US COULD HAVE DONE BETTER.

SHE HEARS, YET DOES NOT LISTEN. HOW COULD I HAVE BEEN SO UNTHINKING, SO... CRUEL?! DID I... MEAN TO HURT HER, UNCONSCIOUSLY?

THOSE AREN'T EASY QUESTIONS, AND THEY HAVE IMPLICATIONS THAT THE YOUNG GERMAN-BORN MUTANT ISN'T AT ALL SURE HE WISHES TO CONFRONT. BUT HE KNOWS THAT SOONER OR LATER--FOR HIS SAKE AS WELL AS KITTY'S--HE MUST.

AT THAT MOMENT, BACK IN THE SHANTY TAVERN...

JOIN US FOR A ROUND OF "EIGHT BALL," SCOTTY?

DON'T MIND IF I DO, FRANK.

BUT, AS SCOTT SETS HIMSELF FOR SOME PRACTICE SHOTS...

WAY TO GO!

TAMPA BAY JUS' TIED THE STEELERS!

ALL EYES IMMEDIATELY GO TO THE BAR TV.

Hmmm -- SINCE NO ONE'S LOOKING MY WAY, I THINK I'LL USE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO GIVE MY ***OPTIC BLASTS*** A QUICK WORKOUT.

I HAVE TO BE CAREFUL ABOUT REMOVING MY GLASSES. IF I OPEN MY EYES EVEN THE MINUTEST FRACTION, THE BEAMS WILL FIRE -- WITH DEVASTATING EFFECT.

GENTLY.

TOO MUCH POWER WILL SMASH THE TABLE.

ALL I WANT TO DO IS MOVE THE CUE BALL.

IT'S A TYPICALLY HARD TEST SCOTT HAS SET FOR HIMSELF -- TO SINK EVERY BALL ON THE TABLE WITH ONE SHOT.

IT REQUIRES THE UTMOST CONTROL OVER HIS OPTIC BLASTS, PLUS THE ABILITY TO JUGGLE SPACIAL GEOMETRIC RELATIONSHIPS IN HIS HEAD.

CYCLOPS DOES BOTH SUPREMELY WELL.

Huh -- ?!?

8

PLOP

I'M WARMED UP, GUYS. SHALL WE BEGIN ?

SCOTT, I HATE TO INTERRUPT, BUT MY DAD WANTS ME TO COME OVER TO HIS PLACE IN CITRUSVILLE. I THINK SOMETHING'S WRONG.

IT'LL BE AN OVER-NIGHT TRIP. MIND KEEPING ME COMPANY?

Uh, NO, LEE. OF COURSE NOT.

I'M OBLIGED. LET'S GET GOING.

WITHIN THE HOUR, THEY'RE SCOOTING INLAND THROUGH THE EVERGLADES IN LEE'S AIRBOAT.

I SHOULD HAVE BROUGHT PAOLO. HE AND DAD ARE OLD PALS.

INSTEAD, I BROUGHT SCOTT. IT WAS SELFISH OF ME, I GUESS. BUT I FEEL COMFORTABLE -- AND GOOD--WITH HIM. I WANT TO KNOW HIM BETTER. I WANT HIM TO KNOW *ME* BETTER.

LEE'S ATTRACTED TO ME. I WISH I KNEW HOW TO HANDLE THIS. I LIKE HER...

... BUT I DON'T WANT TO GET INVOLVED. WITH ANYONE. NOT YET.

HERE WE ARE. THE ANCESTRAL HOMESTEAD.

I'M IMPRESSED.

DAD WORKED LIKE A DOG TO GIVE MOM AN' ME THE GOOD LIFE.

THEN, WHEN THE TIME CAME TO REAP THE FRUITS OF HIS LABOR, MOM DIED.

HE NEVER GOT OVER THAT. HER DEATH LEFT A VOID IN HIS HEART THAT NOTHING SINCE HAS EVER REALLY FILLED.

I... KNOW THE FEELING.

DAD, IT'S LEE! I'M HOME!

WITH COMPANY, I SEE!

YOU LOOK WELL, ALEYTYS-- BUT A BIT THIN.

I'VE BEEN AT SEA. ALL WORK, NO FOOD.

HOW'S BY YOU, POP?

"POP" KILLED HIMSELF THIS MORNING.

I HELPED HIM DO IT.

WHAT?! *NO!!*

OW!

LEE!

MY FATHER, SCOTT-- WHAT'S HAPPENED TO HIM?

I DON'T KNOW. BUT I SUGGEST WE GET OUT OF HERE-- *FAST!*

YOU ARE IN MY DOMAIN, HUMANS!

YOU WILL LEAVE WHEN I AM DONE WITH YOU, NOT BEFORE!

AROUND THEM, REALITY WARPS INSIDE-OUT...

...AS D'SPAYER'S SPELLS TRANSFORM THE FORRESTER HOME INTO A MILE-HIGH OBSIDIAN TOWER THAT--LIKE ITS MASTER--RADIATES SO MALIGN AN AURA THAT BOTH SCOTT AND LEE FIND THEIR SENSES LITERALLY DROWNING IN A MIASMA OF PURE DESPAIR.

NOW, CHILDREN, THE FUN BEGINS.

WHO--WHAT--ARE YOU?!

WHAT DO YOU WANT WITH US?!!

I AM D'SPAYRE!

AND I WANT ALL YOU ARE CAPABLE OF GIVING!

HE LAUGHS.

AND SCOTT FINDS HIMSELF...

...STRUCK BLIND, DEAF, AND DUMB.

WHEN HIS SENSES CLEAR...

...HE DOES NOT BELIEVE WHERE HE IS...

...OR WHO HE IS, OR WHAT IS HAPPENING TO HIM. YET, HE KNOWS THIS IS TRUTH.

ANN, GET THE KIDS INTO THEIR 'CHUTES!

THIS DeHAVILLAND MOSQUITO--LOVINGLY, PAINSTAKINGLY REMODELED AND MAINTAINED BY SCOTT'S FATHER, **MAJOR CHRISTOPHER SUMMERS, USAF**--IS A SUPERB AIRCRAFT...

...IN THE HANDS OF A SUPERLATIVE PILOT. BUT TODAY, BOTH ARE QUITE SIMPLY OUT-MATCHED AND STRUCK DOWN BY POWERS FAR BEYOND HUMAN KEN.

HORROR-STRUCK, SCOTT COMES FACE TO FACE WITH MEMORIES HIDDEN FROM HIM FOR OVER HALF HIS LIFE. THE MAN SCREAMS. THE TEN YEAR OLD BOY TRIED HIS BEST TO BE BRAVE.

THE WOMAN IS HIS MOTHER, **ANN.** THE BOY BESIDE HIM, HIS SIX YEAR OLD BROTHER, **ALEX.**

MOM, WHAT ABOUT YOU AN' DAD?!

WE'LL FOLLOW YOU, MY DARLINGS, AS QUICK AS WE CAN!

I--WE--LOVE YOU BOTH!

WITH THAT, KATHERINE ANN SUMMERS SHOVES HER CHILDREN OUT THE HATCH.

A FEW SECONDS LATER, THE MOSQUITO BLOWS UP.

SCOTT HEARS THE EXPLOSION, BUT HE DOES NOT LOOK BACK. HE PULLS THE RIPCORD, AS HIS FATHER TAUGHT HIM, WRAPPING ARMS AND LEGS TIGHTLY AROUND ALEX SO THE SHOCK OF THE CANOPY OPENING WON'T YANK HIS BROTHER OUT OF HIS GRASP.

THE PARACHUTE FUNCTIONS PERFECTLY.

BUT SCOTT HADN'T COUNTED ON FLAMING DEBRIS FROM THE MOSQUITO SETTING IT ON FIRE.

THE GROUND SEEMED SO CLOSE A MOMENT AGO. NOW IT LOOKS TERRIBLY FAR AWAY.

THEY FALL...

...AND CYCLOPS AWAKES TO FIND HE'S..

...SOMEWHERE ELSE.

I--REMEMBER! MOM, DAD, ALEX--ALL OF IT! *I REMEMBER!!*

WAIT! WHAT GIVES?! I... I'M IN *COSTUME?!?*

L-LORNA. OH, LORNA...

M-MY VISOR... THIS IS MY *OLD* COSTUME! AND... I *KNOW* THIS PLACE! IT'S THE MOUNTAIN HEADQUARTERS OF *LARRY TRASK!*

WHAT IS *HAPPENING* TO ME ?!!

HE STANDS SURROUNDED BY THE ORIGINAL X-MEN. ALL SAVE HIS BROTHER, ALEX--THE SUPERHERO HAVOK--ARE DEAD.

AND, ECHOING THROUGH THE VAST UNDERGROUND COMPLEX...

...HE CAN HEAR THE LEAD-FOOTED APPROACH OF THEIR *MURDERERS.*

ALEX...?

SCOTT, I... I LOVED HER. NOW SHE'S...

SENTINELS!

AM I DREAMING?! AM I *INSANE?!*

THOSE ROBOTS LOOK LIKE THE *X-MEN!*

THEY BUTCHERED OUR FRIENDS, SCOTT, AND THE WOMAN I LOVE.

AND HAVOK IS GOING TO PAY THEM BACK IN KIND!

DRAWING ON THE INFINITE POWER OF COSMIC RAYS-- AS CYCLOPS DRAWS ON SUNLIGHT--HAVOK UNLEASHES AN ENERGY BLAST OF AWESOME PROPORTIONS.

BESIDE HIM--HIS MIND DENYING WHAT HIS HEART ACCEPTS AS TRUTH--CYCLOPS FOLLOWS HIS LEAD.

THE RESULTS ARE DEVASTATING.

ALEX, WATCH YOUR BACK!

SENTINEL-- COLOSSUS-- DON'T!

AAHHHRRR!

WAY TO GO, BIG BROTHER!

THIS TAKES CARE OF NUMBER THREE!

ALEX!!

EVEN AS CYCLOPS FIRES, HE KNOWS HE'S TOO LATE.

THIS MAKES NO SENSE. I REMEMBER WHAT HAPPENED WHEN WE FOUGHT LARRY TRASK'S SENTINELS.* ALEX WAS *HURT*, NOT KILLED, AND THE REST OF THE X-MEN WEREN'T EVEN SCRATCHED.

AND IT WAS THE *ORIGINAL* TEAM. STORM, COLOSSUS --THE OTHER NEW X-MEN-- WOULDN'T JOIN FOR OVER ANOTHER YEAR.

*X-MEN #59-- L.

SOMEONE *MUST* BE PLAYING MINDGAMES-- TRYING TO DRIVE ME MAD.

YOU IGNORE THE OBVIOUS, BIG BROTHER.

OH, NO.

THAT YOU REALLY, TRULY *ARE* MAD.

ON THE OTHER HAND, THIS COULD BE REALITY.

SUPPOSE OUR CONSCIOUSNESS, SCOTT--OUR *SOULS*...

--HAD BEEN TRANSPLANTED INTO THE SENTINELS' FORMS?

SUPPOSE, BUB, THAT BY DESTROYING THEM...

...YOU KILLED US.

IT SEEMS ONLY FAIR THAT WE RETURN THE COMPLIMENT.

SAY YER PRAYERS, SUCKER!

HE SCREAMS...

... AS HIS FRIENDS RIP HIM TO PIECES.

YET, WHEN THE AGONY SUBSIDES, AND HIS EYES SLOWLY OPEN, HE FINDS THAT HE IS WHOLE AGAIN.

IN FLESH, IF NOT IN SPIRIT.

THIS NEW LOCALE IS ALSO ACHINGLY FAMILIAR. IT BRINGS INSTANT MEMORIES...

... AND THOSE MEMORIES, PAIN.

YOU'VE BEEN UP HERE FOR HOURS, DARLING. TIME FOR A BREAK.

THAT VOICE--?!

JEAN?

TERRIFIED, HE TURNS TO FACE HIS HEART'S DESIRE, A WOMAN HE THOUGHT DEAD--LOST FOREVER... THE MISSING PART OF HIS SOUL.

JEAN...?!

HE BELIEVES NOW--BECAUSE HE WANTS TO BELIEVE.

THIS IS INCREDIBLE--FANTASTIC!

HUSH. NO QUESTIONS, MY LOVE. NO WORDS. THIS IS OUR MOMENT. LET'S NOT WASTE IT.

WHAT THE--?! WE'RE IN A CHURCH!

OF COURSE. YOU PROPOSED, DIDN'T YOU?

UNLESS... YOU'VE CHANGED YOUR MIND.

NO.

I'M GLAD.

HE'S WEARING A TUXEDO OVER HIS COSTUME.

--JUST AS HE ACCEPTS HER METAMORPHOSIS FROM MARVEL GIRL...

...TO PHOENIX...

...TO THE BLACK QUEEN...

...TO DARK PHOENIX.

STRANGELY, HE ACCEPTS THIS--AS HE AND JEAN GREY START UP THE AISLE--

WE'VE ARRIVED, BELOVED...

... AT THE MOMENT OF TRUTH.

YOU'VE KNOWN ME IN ALL MY INCARNATIONS, DARLING. WHICH OF US DID YOU LOVE THE BEST?

I...

BE CAREFUL, SCOTT. THE WRONG ANSWER...

...WILL COST YOU DEARLY.

I LOVED-- I LOVE-- YOU.

OF COURSE YOU DO.

SHALL WE CONTINUE?

THIS HAS TO BE A DREAM. I SAW JEAN DIE. *

YET, SHE DIED ONCE BEFORE THAT, AND RESURRECTED HERSELF. ** WHY NOT AGAIN?

*X-MEN #137, **X-MEN #101 -- L.

AS PHOENIX, JEAN'S POWER WAS ALMOST LIMITLESS. SHE SAVED THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE FROM DESTRUCTION. * IS IT SO IMPOSSIBLE TO BELIEVE THAT SHE COULD THEN SAVE HER OWN LIFE?

DEARLY BELOVED, WE ARE GATHERED HERE...

*X-MEN #108 -- L.

...I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU MAN AND WIFE.

CYCLOPS, YOU MAY KISS THE BRIDE.

THANK YOU, PROFESSOR.

JEAN -- MY VISOR! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!

I WANT TO SEE YOUR FACE, THAT'S ALL. YOU HAVE A GOOD FACE.

OPEN YOUR EYES, SCOTT. NOTHING WILL HAPPEN.

HE DOES AS SHE BIDS HIM...

...AND HIS WORST NIGHTMARE COMES TO PASS.

JEAN!

HE RUSHES TO HER SIDE, CRADLES THE BLOODY PULP THAT HAD ONCE BEEN JEAN GREY IN HIS ARMS, TRYING TO WILL LIFE BACK INTO HER SHATTERED FORM.

THEN, HER CORPSE DISAPPEARS, THE CHURCH DISAPPEARS, AND HIS SOBS ARE ANSWERED BY... LAUGHTER.

I'VE ENJOYED PLAYING WITH YOUR MIND, SCOTT SUMMERS. NOW I SHALL DESTROY IT...

... WITH THE IRRESISTABLE POWER OF D'SPAYRE!

CYCLOPS HAS KNOWN FEAR BEFORE. BUT THIS IS DIFFERENT--

--AS HIS DEMON-FOE REACHES THROUGH HIS MIND TO HIS SOUL AND SHRIVELS THEM BOTH.

IN TERROR, HE RUNS.

AND WHEN HIS HEADLONG FLIGHT TAKES HIM OUT A WINDOW, HALFWAY UP D'SPAYRE'S MILE-HIGH TOWER...

... HE PRAYS THAT THE FALL WILL KILL HIM.

I THANK YOU FOR YOUR ENTERTAINMENT, "HERO." I HOPE YOUR LADY COMPANION SERVES ME AS WELL.

FOR A TIME, SCOTT DANCES ALONG THE EDGE OF OBLIVION, WANTING TO SLIP INTO THE ABYSS...

... YET REFUSING TO GIVE D'SPAYRE THAT SATISFACTION.

EVENTUALLY, HE WAKES -- SHAKING WITH RESIDUAL FEAR -- UNAWARE OF WATER BUBBLING OMINOUSLY BEHIND HIM.

I... LIVE. I... FEAR-- NO!

D'SPAYRE MADE ME FEEL LIKE THIS. I CAN BEAT THIS. I MUST!

Eh?! THAT SLOSHING SOUND -- THE STENCH!

GOOD LORD!

A MONSTER! I'LL DESTROY IT WITH MY OPTIC BLASTS!

"STOP IT! WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH ME?!"

AM I SO PANICKED THAT I'VE FORGOTTEN MY TRAINING? I *NEVER* UNLEASH MY BEAMS AGAINST ANY LESS THAN A DEFINATE FOE, A DEFINATE ATTACK.

THIS CREATURE ISN'T AFTER ME.

IT'S HEADING FOR D'SPAYRE'S TEMPLE.

BUT-- IS IT AFTER THE DEMON, OR LEE?!

JUST THINKING ABOUT GOING BACK IN THERE SCARES ME SILLY, BUT I HAVE TO DO IT.

FIRST, THOUGH, I'VE GOT TO CHANGE INTO COSTUME.

I NEED THE ABSOLUTE CONTROL OVER MY OPTIC BLASTS THAT MY RUBY QUARTZ VISOR AFFORDS ME.

THAT SCREAM-- *LEE!*

WITH A CASUAL SWEEP OF HIS GREAT MOSSY ARMS...

...THE MAN-THING CLEARS A PATH INTO D'SPAYRE'S SANCTUM.

Ah, MUCK-BEAST, WILL YOU NEVER LEARN?

LIGHT EXPLODES FROM D'SPAYRE'S HAND, TO INSTANTLY SEATHE THE SWAMP DWELLER IN ACID FLAMES.

*IT'S A SIMPLE, AWFUL PROGRESSION. A TINY PART OF MAN-THING IS STILL HUMAN ENOUGH TO KNOW FEAR--AND WHATEVER KNOWS FEAR, **BURNS** AT THE MAN-THING'S TOUCH.*

THUS DOES D'SPAYRE...

...MAKE HIS EMPATHIC FOE DESTROY HIMSELF. CYCLOPS, SEEING THE BEAST IN AGONY...

...TRIES HIS BEST TO HELP...

...ONLY TO SEE THE DEMON APPEAR TO TELE-PORT--LIKE NIGHT-CRAWLER ALL AROUND THE ROOM...

...LAUGHING SADISTIC-ALLY AS HE BLASTS THE QUAG-BEAST AGAIN AND AGAIN.

LEE? LEE?!

SHE'S UN-CONSCIOUS!

FIEND! WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO HER?!

THE SAME AS I DID TO YOU.

THOUGH I MUST ADMIT, CYCLOPS, THAT YOU HANDLED YOURSELF MUCH BETTER.

YOUR PRECIOUS EYE BEAMS MAY BE EFFECTIVE AGAINST A MORTAL FOE, YOUNGLING.

BUT D'SPAYRE IS *IMMORTAL*. PHYSICAL FORCE CANNOT HARM ME.

HE'S GONE. I WONDER WHY HE DIDN'T USE HIS FEAR ZAP ON ME THIS TIME? UNLESS-- FEAR ISN'T PRECISELY WHAT HE'S AFTER, BUT MERELY A MEANS TO AN END. HIS NAME ITSELF GIVES ME ONE CLUE.

AND-- DURING THE HALLUCINATIONS HE CREATED-- EVERY TRAGEDY WAS GEARED, NOT TO MAKE ME AFRAID, BUT TO MAKE ME LOSE HOPE.

IF THAT'S SO, THEN I THINK I KNOW HOW TO FIGHT HIM.

CYCLOPS DRAWS ON A MOST PERSONAL, PAINFUL MEMORY-- HIS FIRST SIGHT OF DARK PHOENIX-- GAMBLING THAT HIS DESPAIRING FEAR OF HIS TRANSFIGURED LOVE WILL DRAW D'SPAYRE TO HIM.

HIS EMOTIONS ARE NOT FEIGNED. INDEED, THEY ARE SO REAL, SO INTENSE, THAT THEY ATTRACT MAN-THING.

BUT D'SPAYRE REACHES SCOTT FIRST.

MORE FOOL HE.

GOT YOU!!

YOU CANNOT HOLD ME, HUMAN! OR DEFEAT ME!

THEN *ESCAPE*, DEMON! IF I'M SO WEAK--AND YOU'RE SO STRONG--SURELY YOU CAN DO THAT. BUT YOU *CAN'T!*

YOUR POWER'S *BROKEN* WITH ME, D'SPAYRE. I STILL FEEL FEAR--AS DO *ALL* LIVING THINGS--BUT I DON'T LET THAT FEAR RULE ME. I DON'T DESPAIR!

SZZZT!

MAN-THING!

I SENSE NO FEAR IN HIM--ONLY A REFLECTION OF THE COURAGE AND STRENGTH EMANATING FROM CYCLOPS! MY POWERS NO LONGER AFFECT HIM!

THE SWAMP MONSTER'S SET D'SPAYRE AFIRE!

IT'S TEARING THE DEMON APART!

THE CREATURE'S SET THE HOUSE ABLAZE. IF I DON'T BLAST A WAY OUT OF HERE--FAST--

--LEE AND I ARE FINISHED!

MADE IT!

UNNNHHH...

...SCOTT, MY DAD... HE...

EASY, LEE. YOU'RE SAFE NOW. YOU'RE GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT.

D'SPAYRE! THE SWAMP MONSTER!

FORGET IT. IF THEY'RE STILL INSIDE THAT HOLOCAUST, THEY'RE BOTH DEAD. LEE AND I CAME CLOSE--TOO CLOSE-- TO JOINING THEM.

THE DEMON'S FATAL MISTAKE WAS ATTACKING ME THROUGH MY MEMORIES OF JEAN. THROUGH HER, I FACED THE BEST AND WORST OF HUMANITY. I LEARNED THE TRUE MEANING OF COURAGE-- AND OF LOVE.

YIELDING TO YOU, D'SPAY WOULD HAVE BEEN THE ULTIMATE DENIAL -- AND BETRAYAL-- OF THAT LOVE.

ONCE I REALIZED THAT...

...I KNEW I'D DIE BEFORE I'D LET YOU HAVE THAT KIND OF VICTORY. AT THAT MOMENT, YOU WERE BEATEN.

SCOTT LEAVES WITHOUT A BACK-WARDS GLANCE, QUICKLY CHANGING FROM COS-TUME TO STREET CLOTHES BEFORE RUSHING LEE IN THE AIRBOAT TO COUNTY HOSPITAL. THERE, THE DOCTORS TELL HIM SHE'LL BE FINE. HE'S... GLAD.

BY DAWN, THE FIRE IS OUT...

...THE HOUSE REDUCED TO SMOULDERING REMAINS. THEN, AMID THE ASHES...

...THE MAN-THING RISES, WHOLE AND UNHARMED.

TRUE, HE WAS TRAPPED IN THE HEART OF THE FIRE. TRUE, IT CONSUMED HIM AS IT DID THE MANSION. BUT THE QUAG-BEAST WAS CREATED AS MUCH BY SORCERY AS SCIENCE.

THE SWAMP GAVE HIM BIRTH. THE SWAMP SUSTAINS HIM.

JOCK FORRESTER'S HOUSE WAS BUILT WITHIN THE SWAMP. SO, WHEN THE FIRE INCINERATED MAN-THING, THE SWAMP RESURRECTED HIM. AS IT HAS DONE BEFORE AND WILL DO AGAIN.

SO LONG AS HE REMAINS WITHIN ITS VAST CONFINES, HE IS VIRTUALLY IMMORTAL.

HE PAUSES, SEEKING SOME SENSE OF D'SPAYRE AND, FINDING NONE, DEPARTS. FOR A TIME, SILENCE REIGNS.

THEN, SOFT MALEFIC LAUGHTER BREAKS THE STILLNESS...

...TO ECHO OUT ACROSS THE FACE OF THE WORLD.

"... SO LONG AS THERE IS HOPE, IT MUST BE BALANCED... BY DESPAIR. WE CAN REDUCE HIM FOR A TIME, BUT WHILE THERE IS LIFE ITSELF, HE WILL EXIST."-- DAKIMH THE ENCHANTER.

X-MAIL

c/o MARVEL COMICS GROUP
575 Madison Avenue
New York, New York 10022

LOUISE JONES
EDITOR
DANNY FINGEROTH
ASSISTANT EDITOR

In the "Better Late than Never" Department, a couple or three announcements. To begin, a belated celebration of my 50th anniversary on this crazy book — which just happens to coincide with the *50th* issue of the New X-MEN to see print. Trouble is, it was last issue. Ah well. Hooray! Hooray! Here's hoping we're all around for fifty more. Moving right along, we also received word of the results of this year's Eagle Awards, bestowed by the fans of Great Britain on their favorite books, characters, stories, creators, etc. They were kind enough to honor X-MEN with a multitude of awards. To all of them — and especially to Richard Burton and Mike Conroy, who organize and run the Awards — a heartfelt thank you. And, finally, some words about the art team on this issue. Brent Anderson penciled it. Few of you may know the name; as yet, he's had few published works. That's about to change — with a vengeance. His primary job is as penciler on the new KA-ZAR series and, as that and this X-MEN story show, he's an artistic power to be reckoned with. He'll also be penciling — Lord and Weezie Jones willing! — the 1981 X-MEN ANNUAL. As for the inker, Josef Rubinstien, X-MEN is now his regular assignment. He has one tough act to follow in Terry Austin but, in truth, none of us working on the book can think of anyone more capable of filling Terry's shoes. Josef's style is different, but no less spectacular. Here's hoping he sticks around for quite awhile.

—chris claremont

Dear Marvel Comics,

This is a fan letter from a Mom! I would like to try and tell you how much enjoyment the kids have gotten from your comics and how glad I am that you have created a fine magazine for them to read. Our neighborhood is currently in a Marvel mood. The local favorites are the AVENGERS and the X-MEN. The kids' interest in comics extends from heavy trading with careful weight given to each transaction, to excited attendance at comics conventions, to the building of select collections to the anxious wait every month for the mailman to come. What do I think of all this? Your plots are terrific, although it's hard to wait several issues for a story to end. But I realize that's probably why the plots are so good — you take the time to develop them properly. Your characters are realistic and fallible, even with possessing their marvelous powers. There are great lessons here for our kids. What nerve to kill off a character (Phoenix) in order to make a statement about personal sacrifice. The kids certainly can identify with characters like Kitty Pryde. The vocabulary in these comics is excellent. You are enriching their minds with a dash of morality, a sprinkle of mythology and a generous handful of wisdom. Please, please, keep up the good work and the high standards. TV doesn't offer anywhere near the quality or creativity you offer. As my 10 year old son says, they are 3-dimensional people with problems and feelings. Real things happen to them besides their fantastic adventures. The kids identify with these characters. I hope you continue to bear this responsibility as capably as you have in the past. I realize now that I have forgotten to compliment you on the beautiful artwork. These perceptive kids around here appreciate it also and are always suitably impressed with an unusual point-of-view or scenic layout. You are making them gourmets! Thank you.

You are also making letter-writers out of them. The same kid who suffers over a four sentence "Thank You" note will sit down and dash off a letter to the Editor without a moment's hesitation!

Susan Palmer
(no address)

There are certain letters that need no commentary and prompt us to forego our usual, hopefully witty, snappy-patter response. This is one of the nicest we've ever received. From myself — and all the others, past and present, who had anything to do with making the X-MEN the book it is today — Ms. Palmer, thank you.

—csc

X-People,

The maturation of Kitty Pryde's personality in X-MEN #139 contained pros as well as cons. Whereas her crush on Peter was pleasantly subtle, her abhorrence of Kurt was much too conspicuous. Her use of a double negative on Page 9 made her character seem veritable. "And it didn't take hardly any effort at all." Yet her soliloquy on Page 10, about her being a genius and taking college courses made me wonder whether Chris had accidentally used the double negative.

There is an element of Kitty's power (also the Vision's, Red Ghost's, etc.) that has been overlooked. This is that speech is made when air rushes through the vocal cords, causing them to vibrate. Therefore, Kitty should not be able to speak when she, or more specifically her vocal cords, are intangible, as she did on Page 9, panel 5, for the air cannot cause to vibrate what it cannot touch.

X-MEN #139 was special because it let John Byrne show his versatility. No other artist could have drawn the complicated machinery of the Danger Room, the casualness of suburbia and the unspoiled pulchritude of Canada's tranquil northland all so perfectly. Like always, the minute detail was everywhere: Wolverine crushing his beer can on Page 8, the fire extinguisher on Page 10, Stevie Hunter's "Bo Derek" hairstyle, Nightcrawler picking up his dropped Coke on Page 12 and even the smoking chimney on Page 13. Glynis Wein's colors were especially great on the second to last page.

Johnathon Allsopp
338 Robin / Beaconsfield
Quebec, Canada H9W 1R6

Interesting point about Kitty, Jon. However, at the point in question, Kitty's vocal cords probably were *not* intangible. They probably became solid — and functional — the moment she phased through the door. Alternately, the copy could be an echo of what was said before she phased. Still, what you say is quite valid and I'll bear it in mind in the future. (In fact, it reminds me of some letters wondering how Banshee could scream and talk simultaneously. He can't. So he doesn't.) As for the double negative — even a genius can speak sloppily from time to time. For all Kitty's smarts, she wants very much to be "jus' plain folks;" her speech patterns are an outgrowth of that desire.

—csc

NEXT ISSUE: We herald the return of the man who helped create this fershlugginer phenomenon in the first place, Dave Cockrum, taking up the penciling chores on X-MEN after a three year hiatus. With his premiere outing he gets to draw just about every X-Man there is, plus a host of villains and various supporting characters. It's a simple story — the X-Men versus Dr. Doom. Guess who wins.

—chris claremont 11/80

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THE UNCANNY X-MEN™

TM

Cockrum/Rubinstein

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE UNCANNY X-MEN!™

KIDNAPPED!

CHRIS CLAREMONT WRITER * DAVE COCKRUM & JOE RUBINSTEIN ARTISTS * JOE ROSEN LETTERER * GLYNIS WEIN COLORIST * LOUISE JONES EDITOR * JIM SHOOTER EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

IN THE HEART OF THE WEST SIDE OF MANHATTAN -- IN WHAT WAS ONCE ONE OF THE ROUGHEST SLUM NEIGHBORHOODS IN THE ENTIRE CITY -- STANDS **LINCOLN CENTER**, A PERFORMING ARTS COMPLEX FAMED THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. ITS CENTERPIECE IS THE **METROPOLITAN OPERA HOUSE**, WHICH TONIGHT PLAYS HOST TO BRITAIN'S **ROYAL BALLET**.

THANK YOU FOR INVITING ME, ORORO. I HOPE YOU'LL ENJOY THIS AS MUCH AS I WILL.

THANK *KITTY*. THIS WAS *HER* DOING, STEVIE, NOT MINE.

AMONG THOSE ATTENDING THIS GALA PREMIERE ARE **STEVIE HUNTER** -- A PRIMA BALLERINA HERSELF, UNTIL THE TRAGIC ACCIDENT THAT ENDED HER CAREER --

-- AND **ORORO** (WHO, AS **STORM**, IS LEADER OF A TEAM OF MUTANT SUPER-HEROES, THE UNCANNY **X-MEN**.) THEY DON'T KNOW IT YET, BUT THIS IS AN EVENING NEITHER WOMAN WILL EVER FORGET.

STORM IS HERE. EXCELLENT. ALL I NEED DO NOW IS SPRING THE TRAP -- AND THE X-MEN ARE *MINE!*

STORM
ANGEL
COLOSSUS
WOLVERINE
NIGHTCRAWLER
ICEMAN
POLARIS
HAVOC
BANSHEE

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ORIGINALLY, THIS WAS STEVIE'S SPECIAL CHRISTMAS PRESENT FROM **KITTY PRYDE**--ORORO'S FELLOW X-MAN AND THE NEWEST PUPIL IN STEVIE'S DANCE SCHOOL. BUT KITTY WAS STRUCK DOWN BY A SEVERE ATTACK OF FLU. SHE ASKED ORORO TO TAKE HER PLACE. WITH RESERVATIONS, ORORO ACCEPTED.

THE DANCING IS BEAUTIFUL.

THAT BEAUTY IS THE RESULT OF YEARS OF HARD WORK AND PAIN.

IT'S A HARD LIFE, ORORO, A CRUEL ONE.

AND I'D GIVE MY SOUL TO BE A PART OF IT AGAIN.

THERE'S SUCH SADNESS IN STEVIE'S VOICE, SUCH...LONGING. I WANT TO REACH OUT, TO COMFORT HER--YET SOMETHING HOLDS ME BACK.

GODDESS, WHAT IS WRONG WITH ME?! STEVIE IS A LOVELY WOMAN. KITTY LIKES HER UNRESERVEDLY. WHY CAN'T I?

LOST IN THEIR OWN THOUGHTS--AND CAUGHT UP IN THE PERFORMANCE UNFOLDING ON-STAGE--NEITHER ORORO NOR STEVIE HEARS THE DOOR TO PROFESSOR XAVIER'S PRIVATE BOX OPEN.

THE INTRUDER'S APPROACH IS AS SILENT AS DEATH ITSELF.

AND HER TOUCH IS AS DEADLY.

WHAT--?!

CURTAINS, DROPPING IN FRONT OF THE BOX--CUTTING US OFF FROM THE REST OF THE AUDIENCE!

I BEG YOUR PARDON!

WHO ARE YOU--?!

THIS IS A PRIVATE BOX! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?!

I AM MISS LOCKE.

I SERVE ARCADE.

STORM KNOWS THAT NAME, ONLY TOO WELL. HER REACTION IS INSTINCTIVE AND IMMEDIATE. SHE USES HER ELEMENTAL POWERS TO GENERATE AN IRRESISTIBLE BATTERING RAM OF AIR...

...THAT HURLS MISS LOCKE AGAINST THE REAR WALL OF THE BOX, STUNNING HER.

ORORO, YOU--YOU'RE CREATING A *HURRICANE* IN HERE! BUT--*HOW*?!

WHO-- WHAT-- *ARE* YOU?!?

WHUNFFF!

STORM'S ACTION DOES NOT GO UNNOTICED BY THOSE IN THE NEIGHBORING BOXES.

EDWARD, IT'S GOTTEN SO COLD!

WHERE DID THIS BREEZE COME FROM?!

BLASTED AIR CONDITIONING! WHY COULDN'T THEY HAVE TURNED IT ON LAST SUMMER, WHEN IT COULD HAVE DONE SOME GOOD!

WE WILL TALK LATER, STEVIE. I'LL EXPLAIN EVERYTHING.

I HOPE.

THAT WAS A *WARNING*, MISS LOCKE.

A MOST IMPRESSIVE ONE, STORM. BUT ALSO A WASTED EFFORT.

ORORO, I FEEL... SO... UNNNHHH ...

STEVIE!

I AM NOT IN YOUR POWER, X-MAN.

YOU ARE IN *MINE*.

NO!

WHEN I TOUCHED YOU AND YOUR FRIEND, STORM, I INJECTED A CONTACT POISON INTO YOUR BODIES. WITHOUT THE ANTIDOTE, YOU'LL BOTH BE DEAD IN MINUTES.

WH-WHY?! WAS ARCADE TOO... FRIGHTENED TO KILL ME IN PERSON?

HARDLY. THE POISON WAS MERELY TO ENSURE THAT I HAD YOUR UNDIVIDED ATTENTION--AND TO PREVENT YOUR STOPPING MY DEPARTURE.

ACTUALLY, I'M HERE BECAUSE I NEED THE X-MEN'S HELP.

"AS A CONSEQUENCE OF BUSINESS DEALINGS HE HAD WITH A MUTANT KNOW AS THE *TOAD*,* ARCADE INCURRED THE ENMITY OF *VICTOR VON DOOM*, DEPOSED DICTATOR OF LATVERIA. DR. DOOM KIDNAPPED ARCADE.

"HE HAS SWORN THAT ARCADE WILL *PAY* FOR INSULTING HIM. DR. DOOM IS A MAN OF HIS WORD."

*MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE # --LOUISE.

I WISH THE X-MEN TO RESCUE ARCADE, AND TO MAKE CERTAIN THAT VON DOOM NEVER BOTHERS HIM AGAIN. TO GIVE YOU AN INCENTIVE, I HAVE KIDNAPPED THOSE DEAREST TO YOU...

...THE PARENTS OF JEAN GREY, MOIRA MacTAGGERT, CANDY SOUTHERN, AMANDA SEFTON AND ILLYANA RASPUTIN, COLOSSUS' SISTER.

THEY ARE IN *MURDERWORLD*. FAIL TO FREE ARCADE, STORM, AND THEY WILL *DIE* THERE.

STORM STRUGGLES TO RISE--BUT. A BLINDING SURGE OF PAIN SMASHES HER DOWN, BRINGING A STRANGLED CRY FROM HER LIPS; AN ICY NUMBNESS WASHES THROUGH HER LIKE A TIDAL WAVE AND WITH HER LAST THOUGHT, SHE WONDERS IF THIS IS DEATH?

SOUND.

SCREECH-ING, CACA-PHONOUS-- THE ULTI-MATE CAT-FIGHT--

--THAT SLOWLY REFINES ITSELF...

...INTO THE SKIRL OF VIOLINS.

THE...ORCHESTRA ...STILL PLAYING.

I'M...NOT DEAD!

I...ALMOST WISH I WAS. I FEEL... AWFUL.

STEVIE'S GONE!

MISS LOCKE MUST HAVE TAKEN HER AS ANOTHER HOSTAGE.

IN THE CURTAINED BOX...

...STORM CHANGES INTO COSTUME...

...AND CREATES A WIND THAT CARRIES HER OFF INTO THE CLEAR NIGHT SKY.

SHE SAID SHE'D ABDUCTED THOSE THE X-MEN LOVE MOST. I HAVE TO MAKE CERTAIN SHE WAS TELLING THE TRUTH.

MOIRA IS IN IRELAND, AND LITTLE ILLYANA IN RUSSIA--A BIT OUT OF MY RANGE.

BUT AMANDA--NIGHTCRAWLER'S SWEETHEART--SHARES AN APARTMENT WITH TWO FELLOW STEWARDESSES ON CENTRAL PARK SOUTH.

AMANDA'S MOTHER IS A SORCERESS OF AWESOME POWER. AMANDA IS ONE OF NO MEAN ABILITY HERSELF.* I FIND IT HARD TO BE-LIEVE MISS LOCKE COULD EASILY CAPTURE HER.

*AS SEEN IN X-MEN ANNUAL*4--L.

WHAT AM I SAYING? ARCADE ONCE CAPTURED THE X-MEN WITH RIDICULOUS EASE. IT TOOK ALL OUR POWER AND SKILL--PLUS MORE LUCK THAN WE DESERVED--TO ESCAPE FROM MURDERWORLD.*

NO ONE SEEMS HOME. I'LL HAVE TO PICK THE LOCKS ON THESE GLASS DOORS TO GET INSIDE.

*X-MEN#'S 122 & 123--GUESS WHO?

THAT PERFUME--I RECOGNIZE IT FROM THE THEATER. MISS LOCKE WAS WEARING IT. AND, PINNED TO THAT PILLOW--THAT *CARD!*

A

OH, AMANDA--NO!

I TRIED TO TELEPHONE THE GREYS, BUT THERE'S NO ANSWER. THEY LIVE 90 MILES UP THE HUDSON RIVER. IF I SUMMON A POWERFUL ENOUGH TAILWIND...

...I CAN BE THERE IN MINUTES.

BUT TO DO THAT, I MUST WARP WEATHER PATTERNS ACROSS A CONSIDERABLE AREA. I'LL CREATE ATMOSPHERIC CHAOS OVER THE CITY.

IF THE NEED WERE ANY LESS IMPERATIVE, I WOULD NOT DO IT. BUT I MUST.

ONCE MORE, SHE BENDS THE ELEMENTS TO HER WILL, THE WIND AROUND HER AN UNIMAGINABLE FORCE.

AGAIN, HER ACTIONS DO NOT GO UNNOTICED.

WHAT THE--?! WHERE'D THIS FREAK JETSTREAM COME FROM?!

IT'S CUT OUR GROUND-SPEED DOWN TO ALMOST ZERO!

THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE-- BUT IT'S HAPPENING!

SOON, IN THE SLEEPY HAMLET OF ***ANNANDALE-ON-HUDSON***, JUST DOWN THE ROAD FROM **BARD COLLEGE**--WHERE PROFESSOR JOHN GREY HAS TAUGHT FOR THE PAST FIFTEEN YEARS...

HERE IS THE GREY'S HOUSE. ALL LOOKS PEACEFUL.

I'M...TOO LATE. MISS LOCKE ANTICIPATED MY COMING HERE. THIS NOTE TELLS WHERE VON DOOM IS HOLDING ARCADE.

THOUGH ***PHOENIX*** IS NO MORE, VILLAINS WILL STRIKE AT THE X-MEN THROUGH HER FAMILY.

THIS IS THE HOLEMPATHIC MATRIX CRYSTAL GIVEN THE GREYS BY ***EMPRESS LILANDRA*** AFTER JEAN'S DEATH.* IT NOT ONLY CONTAINS A THREE-DIMENSIONAL IMAGE OF ***JEAN GREY--PHOENIX***-- BUT ALSO THE ESSENCE OF HER PERSONALITY.

X-MEN 138 --ME AGAIN.

AH, MY BELOVED FRIEND, WOULD I HAD DIED IN YOUR PLACE. I...STILL MISS YOU.

THE X-MEN COULD NOT SAVE YOU, JEAN, BUT WE CAN--WE ***WILL***-- SAVE YOUR PARENTS. ON THAT, YOU HAVE MY ***WORD***.

FROM THE GREY'S, STORM FLIES SOUTH AND EAST TO THE WESTCHESTER COUNTY TOWN OF SALEM CENTER, AND THE VENERABLE MANSION THAT HAS BEEN HER HOME FOR THE PAST THREE YEARS. THE NEIGHBORS KNOW IT AS PROFESSOR CHARLES XAVIER'S SCHOOL FOR GIFTED YOUNGSTERS.

IN ADDITION, HOWEVER, IT IS THE SECRET HEADQUARTERS OF THE X-MEN. THERE, SHE TELLS HER STORY TO HER STUNNED FRIENDS.

PROFESSOR XAVIER'S INITIAL MOVE IS A SURPRISE. HE CONTACTS HANK McCOY--THE BEAST--A FORMER X-MAN, NOW AN AVENGER.

ABOUT ARCADE, PROFESSOR, WE KNOW LITTLE.

BUT DR. DOOM IS SOMETHING ELSE AGAIN.

IS HE THAT FORMIDABLE A FOE?

IN *MAGNETO'S* CLASS, AT LEAST. I HEARD OF HIM WHILE GROWING UP IN THE CIRCUS. HIS NAME IS KNOWN AND FEARED THROUGHOUT CENTRAL EUROPE.

EVEN AMANDA'S MOTHER, *MARGALI*, RESPECTS HIS POWER.

IF THE X-MEN PLAN TO TACKLE DR. DOOM, YOU'LL NEED ALL THE HELP YOU CAN GET. I CAN ALERT MY FELLOW AVENGERS.

THANK YOU, BEAST. PERHAPS.

FOR THE PRESENT, I PREFER TO KEEP THIS MATTER "WITHIN THE FAMILY."

AS YOU REQUESTED, I'LL TRANSMIT THE AVENGERS' FILES ON DOOM TO YOU. I HOPE THEY'LL DO SOME GOOD. BEAST, OUT.

EXCELLENT, HANK. WE'LL BE IN TOUCH.

CHARLEY, YOU TALK LIKE WE PLAN ON DOIN' WHAT THAT LOCKE BROAD WANTS! ARE WE GIVIN' IN?!

HAVE YOU AN ALTER-NATIVE, WOLVERINE?

TRASH HER, PERMA-NENTLY. AND MURDER-WORLD. GET OUR PEOPLE BACK AN' LET ARCADE ROT!

CHARLEY, WE CAN'T YIELD TO BLACKMAIL. IF MISS LOCKE GETS AWAY WITH THIS, WE'LL NEVER SEE AN END TO IT.

WE CAN'T PROTECT ALL THOSE WE CARE FOR, WE'LL ALWAYS BE VUL-NERABLE THAT WAY. OUR ONLY CHANCE IS TA STOP IT BEFORE IT STARTS. WE FIGHT BACK!

WE MAKE CERTAIN NO ONE EVER TRIES TA GET AT THE X-MEN THIS WAY AGAIN -- BY MAKIN' THE PRICE OF DOIN' IT TOO HIGH TA PAY.

WOLVERINE IS... RIGHT, PROFESSOR-- AT LEAST IN PART. WE CANNOT SUB-MIT. YET WE CANNOT ABANDON MISS LOCKE'S HOSTAGES. AND I WILL NOT SACRIFICE THEM.

YOU SPEAK AS THOUGH YOU HAVE A PLAN, STORM.

I HAVE.

A CONTINENT REMOVED FROM THE X-MEN IS THE **RIO DIABLO**-- A FORBIDDING, DESOLATE, BEAUTIFUL CORNER OF THE AMERICAN SOUTHWEST.

HERE, MILES FROM ANYWHERE...

...CAN BE FOUND **ALEX SUMMERS** AND **LORNA DANE.**

THEY, TOO, ARE MUTANTS. AS **HAVOC** AND **POLARIS**, THEY FOUGHT BESIDE THE X-MEN --

--THOUGH THEY NEVER FORMALLY JOINED THE TEAM, THEY'RE GRADUATE STUDENTS, EACH NOW COMPLETING FIELD WORK ON THEIR DOCTORATES.

A CLOSE CALL, LORNA.

SO I SEE. THAT ROCK SLIDE MISSED THE HOUSE...

...BUT IT WRECKED THE WINDMILL, OUR PRIMARY SOURCE OF ELECTRICITY. D'YOU WANT ME TO RADIO TOWN FOR A REPAIR CREW?

THAT'LL COST AN ARM AND A LEG, AND TAKE ALL DAY.

LET'S SEE IF WE CAN'T DO THE JOB OURSELVES.

DRAWING ENERGY FROM **COSMIC** RAYS...

...ALEX METABOLIZES IT, CHANNELS IT THROUGH HIS BODY--

--REFINING, SHAPING, FOCUSING IT WITHOUT EFFORT--BEFORE MANIFESTING IT AS A BEAM OF BLINDING WHITE FIRE.

WORKING WITH SURGICAL PRECISION, HE CLEARS THE RUBBLE FROM THE TOPPLED WINDMILL.

NOT BAD, HON.

WHEN ALEX IS FINISHED, LORNA USES HER OWN ABILITY TO CONTROL **MAGNETISM** TO RAISE THE WIND-MILL...

AND, IF I DO SAY SO MYSELF...

...AND MOLD IT BACK INTO SHAPE.

...THIS AIN'T TOO SHABBY, EITHER.

HAVOC, POLARIS--YOU ARE ***NEEDED!***

WHAT THE--?! AN ***ASTRAL IMAGE*** OF PRO-FESSOR X!

HE'S CONTACT-ING US ***TELE-PATHICALLY!***

PROFESSOR--***NO!*** ALEX AND I AREN'T SUPER-HEROES. WE LEFT THE X-MEN TO LIVE OUR LIVES IN PEACE, AS MUCH LIKE NORMAL PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE.

HAD I A CHOICE, CHILD, I WOULD RESPECT YOUR DECISION.

BUT I HAVE NOT. THE NEED IS DESPER-ATE.

ANGEL HAS SENT ONE OF HIS PRIVATE AIRCRAFT FOR YOU. IT WILL ARRIVE AT YOUR LOCAL AIRPORT IN APPROXIMATELY TWO HOURS.

WILL YOU BE THERE TO MEET IT?

WE'LL... ***BE*** THERE, SIR.

THANKS FOR MAKING MY DECISION ***FOR*** ME, BIG FELLA.

HMH? OH--SORRY ABOUT THAT.

AND I THOUGHT I'D BROKEN YOU OF THE HABIT. Y'KNOW, WHATEVER HAPPENED MUST BE PRETTY SERIOUS FOR THE PROFESSOR TO SUMMON US SO ABRUPTLY.

WE'LL KNOW SOON ENOUGH. IN THE MEANTIME, SINCE HE LEFT US SOME TIME TO KILL...

ON THE EASTERN SEABOARD, COLLEGE SOPHOMORE **BOBBY DRAKE** IS JUST FINISHING A GRUELING ALL-NIGHTER...

SCRATCH ONE TERM PAPER, FINALLY!

SPRIT

I'VE BEEN WRITING FOR TWENTY STRAIGHT HOURS, BUT THE END RESULT IS PRETTY DARN GOOD.

I'M HUNGRY, UNFORTUNATELY, DINING COMMONS WON'T BE OPEN FOR AT LEAST ANOTHER HOUR. SO I GUESS I'LL FINISH OFF MY LAST BEER.

WITH DECEPTIVE EASE, BOBBY USES HIS OWN MUTANT TALENT TO SLOW THE MOLECULAR ACTION OF THE AIR AROUND HIS FOREARM. IN SECONDS THE CAN IS ICE COLD.

ICEMAN-- YOU ARE NEEDED!

PROFESSOR X!

RETURN TO THE MANSION, AT ONCE. I'LL EXPLAIN WHEN YOU REACH HERE.

FURTHER EAST-- ELEVEN MILES ABOVE THE NORTH ATLANTIC-- THE FIRST BRITISH AIRWAYS CONCORDE FLIGHT OF THE DAY..

...ARROWS TOWARDS NEW YORK'S KENNEDY INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AT TWICE THE SPEED OF SOUND.

ABOARD, **SEAN CASSIDY**--ONCE KNOWN AS THE X-MAN, **BANSHEE**, UNTIL INJURIES FORCED HIS RETIREMENT*-- IMPATIENTLY WISHES THE FLIGHT WERE OVER.

HE'S BEEN ON THE ROAD ALL NIGHT, BUT HIS GRIM, HAGGARD DEMEANOR HAS LITTLE TO DO WITH FATIGUE.

*IN X-MEN #129 -- L.

BANSHEE--!

CHARLES! WE'VE GOT TROUBLE, OLD FRIEND. MOIRA'S BEEN KIDNAPPED!

I KNOW, SEAN. SHE WAS NOT THE ONLY ONE.

I'D INTENDED ASKING YOUR AID. IT SEEMS YOU'VE ANTICIPATED ME.

THE ROLLS-ROYCE WILL PICK YOU UP AT JFK.

FINE, CHARLES. I'LL SEE YE SOON.

IT'S BEEN AGES SINCE I'VE SEEN CHARLES CREATE A TELEPATHIC ASTRAL PROJECTION. HE LOOKED ROCKY. THE EFFORT MUST HA' COST HIM DEAR. I PRAY HE'S ALL RIGHT.

IN THE MANSION, STORM'S CONCERN ECHOES BANSHEE'S.

ARE YOU WELL, PROFESSOR? YOU LOOK SO PALE.

I AM... TIRED, STORM.

I'VE BEEN TRYING TO MENTALLY CONTACT SCOTT BUT I SPENT MYSELF SUMMONING THE OTHERS. I LACK THE STRENGTH TO REACH HIM.

THERE'S BEEN A SUBTLE SHIFT IN THE EARTH'S MAGNETIC FIELD, CREATING INTERFERENCE--PSYCHIC STATIC--THAT INHIBITS MY TELEPATHIC COMMUNICATION OVER LONG DISTANCES, FORCING ME TO MAKE A SUPREME EFFORT TO TRANSMIT THE SIMPLEST OF MESSAGES.

THIS CAN ONLY BE THE WORK OF ONE MAN--THE X-MEN'S ARCH FOE, *MAGNETO!*

BUT WHY HAS HE DONE THIS?! AND WHY NOW?!?

ANGUISHED QUESTIONS, UNANSWERABLE QUESTIONS-- ADD TO XAVIER'S ALREADY CONSIDERABLE BURDEN. TOO MUCH SEEMS TO BE HAPPENING, TOO QUICKLY. IS IT COINCIDENCE, XAVIER WONDERS, OR PART OF SOME GREATER DESIGN? AND WHEN THE CRUNCH COMES, WILL HIS X-MEN PROVE EQUAL TO IT?

AT THAT MOMENT, ON AN ISLAND IN THE BALMY, SUN-DRENCHED CARIBBEAN, A MAN WHO WAS ONCE CALLED PART OF THE HEART AND SOUL OF THE X-MEN...

...IS WASHED ASHORE AND STRANDED BY THE FALLING TIDE.

HIS NAME IS **SCOTT SUMMERS.**

AS **CYCLOPS**, HE LED THE X-MEN, UNTIL JEAN GREY'S DEATH. AFTER THAT, HE TOOK A LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM THE TEAM.

LATELY, HE'S BEEN A CREWMAN ABOARD THE TRAWLER, ARCADIA. HE LIES STILL ON THE BEACH...

UNNNNHHH-- WHERE AM...

...UNTIL THE MORNING SUN WARMS HIM, WAKES HIM. WITHOUT THINKING, HE OPENS HIS EYES.

RUBY BEAMS OF FORCE--CYCLOPS UNCONTROLLABLE, NIGH IRRESISTIBLE **OPTIC BLASTS**--EXPLODE FROM HIS EYES, GOUGING A DEEP HOLE IN THE SAND...

...IIIIIIIII--!!

KOW

...AND SIMULTANEOUSLY HURL SCOTT INTO THE AIR.

MY GLASSES! I'VE LOST MY *RUBY QUARTZ GLASSES*--THE ONLY ARTIFICIAL SHIELD CAPABLE OF HOLDING MY OPTIC BLASTS IN CHECK!

IT MUST HAVE HAPPENED DURING THE NIGHT, AFTER AL AND I WERE KNOCKED OVERBOARD!

MAYBE THEY ONLY JUST FELL OFF. THEY COULD BE SOMEWHERE NEARBY, ON THIS BEACH.

FAT CHANCE. I'M GRASPING AT STRAWS.

I CAN'T KEEP MY EYES TIGHTLY CLOSED EVERY WAKING SECOND, AND WHENEVER THEY OPEN--NO MATTER HOW SLIGHTLY--MY OPTIC BLASTS WILL FIRE.

I'LL HAVE TO FIND A WAY TO *KEEP* THEM CLOSED.

THERE. THIS *BLINDFOLD* I IMPROVISED OUT OF MY SHIRT SHOULD DO THE TRICK. THE ONLY PROBLEM IS, NOW I CAN'T SEE.

SCOTT!

OH, SCOTT, THANK HEAVEN YOU'RE ALL RIGHT! WHEN THE STORM SEPARATED US, I THOUGHT YOU'D DROWNED FOR SURE!

*THIS NEW VOICE BELONGS TO **ALEYTIS FORRESTER**, OWNER AND CAPTAIN OF THE ARCADIA. SHE AND SCOTT HAVE KNOWN EACH OTHER ONLY A SHORT TIME, BUT EVEN SO, THEY'VE BECOME **FRIENDS**. LAST NIGHT, WHEN A FREAK STORM ERUPTED OUT OF NOWHERE TO NEARLY CAPSIZE THE ARCADIA AND TOSS AL OVERBOARD, SCOTT IMMEDIATELY DOVE IN AFTER HER.*

SINCE THEN, SHE'S TRIED HARD NOT TO THINK ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED TO HER BOAT.

THAT BANDAGE--! HAVE YOU HURT YOUR EYES?!

UH...YEAH... KIND OF...

I'VE HAD PARAMEDIC TRAINING. LET ME TAKE A LOOK...

NO!

NO, PLEASE. BELIEVE ME, AL, THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN DO.

WHERE ARE WE?

SOMEWHERE IN THE BAHAMAS. WHICH MEANS CIVILIZATION COULD LITERALLY BE RIGHT AROUND THE CORNER.

AND IF IT ISN'T?

WE SURVIVE. WE WAIT FOR SOMEONE TO FIND US. IF THE COAST GUARD IS ON ITS TOES, IF WE'RE REAL LUCKY, WE COULD BE PICKED UP TODAY, TOMORROW, ANYTIME.

OR WE COULD BE HERE THE REST OF OUR LIVES.

MEANWHILE, IN THE "X-MANSION"...

...I WILL TAKE WOLVERINE, NIGHTCRAWLER, COLOSSUS AND ANGEL AND CONFRONT DR. DOOM. IF POSSIBLE, WE'LL TRY TO SECURE ARCADE'S RELEASE WITHOUT A FIGHT.

I WOULDN'T COUNT ON THAT, ORORO.

SIMULTANEOSLY, HAVOK, YOU-- ACCOMPANIED BY POLARIS, ICEMAN AND BANSHEE-- WILL LOCATE MURDERWORLD AND RESCUE MISS LOCKE'S HOSTAGES.

WE FOUR HAVE NEVER OPERATED AS A TEAM. I SUGGEST A COMBAT WORKOUT IN THE *DANGER ROOM* TO LOOSEN UP.

WHY'S EVERYONE SMILING?

DID I SAY SOMETHING FUNNY?

NOT QUITE, HAVOK, BUT AS YOU CAN SEE, THE DANGER ROOM IS TEMPORARILY OUT OF COMMISSION.

WHAT HIT THIS PLACE?!

SPRITE, SHE SINGLE-HANDEDLY FOUGHT-- AND DEFEATED SOME SORT OF SUPERHUMAN MONSTER LAST CHRISTMAS EVE;* WE'RE STILL PICKING UP THE PIECES.

*X-MEN #143 -- LOUISE.

AND, SPEAKING OF THE X-MEN'S YOUNGEST MEMBER...

I WISH I WAS GOING WITH YOU, ORORO.

JUST GET BETTER, LITTLE ONE. THAT'S THE IMORTANT THING.

I KNOW. G'BYE, ORORO. BE CAREFUL. COME BACK SAFE!

SHORTLY THEREAFTER, STORM'S TEAM LIFTS-OFF IN THE X-MEN'S SUPERSONIC "BLACKBIRD." THIS MODIFIED SR-71 HAD ALSO BEEN SEVERELY DAMAGED DURING KITTY'S DESPERATE BATTLE...

...BUT NIGHTCRAWLER AND WOLVERINE HAD WORKED NIGHT AND DAY TO REPAIR IT.

THEY'RE PROUD OF THEIR WORK--BUT, EVEN SO, AS THE HUGE AIRCRAFT RISES SMOOTHLY AND SILENTLY INTO THE EVENING AIR, BOTH MEN CROSS THEIR FINGERS.

TWO HUNDRED MILES UP-COUNTRY-- IN THE HEART OF NEW YORK'S ADIRONDACK MOUNTAINS-- STANDS A MEDIEVAL CASTLE. ORIGINALLY CONSTRUCTED BY DR. DOOM, IT WAS RECENTLY TURNED INTO AN AMUSEMENT PARK BY ONE OF THE X-MEN'S OLD FOES, NOW REFORMED: THE **TOAD**.*

DESPITE ITS REMOTENESS, TOADWORLD WAS A GREAT SUCCESS.

*THE AFOREMENTIONED TWO-IN-ONE #68--L.

THEN, WITHOUT WARNING OR EXPLANATION, IT WAS CLOSED DOWN. VISITORS WERE TURNED AWAY, POLITELY BUT FIRMLY. FOR WEEKS NOW, NO OUTSIDER HAS SET FOOT WITHIN ITS TOWERING WALLS.

UNTIL TODAY.

A LIGHTNING BOLT!

BUT--IT'S SO BIG, AND IT DROPPED OUT OF A CLEAR SKY! SOUND THE ALARM! WE'RE UNDER ATTACK!

I AM STORM!!

I COME IN PEACE.

I SEEK THE *MASTER* OF THIS PLACE. I WOULD SPEAK WITH HIM. *IMMEDIATELY.*

THIS IS *PRIVATE PROPERTY*, BABE!

AN' THE BOSS DON'T TAKE KINDLY TO *TRESPASSERS!*

GET OUT-- OR BE *THROWN OUT!*

VINCENZO, *I* DECIDE WHO SHALL-- OR SHALL NOT-- BE REMOVED FROM MY RESIDENCE.

I AM-- DOOM!

I RULE HERE.

I UNDER-STAND YOU HAVE SOME BUSINESS WITH ME, YOUNG WOMAN?

YOU HAVE ARCADE. I WANT HIM ALIVE AND UNHURT.

JUST LIKE THAT? YOU DEMAND, AND DOOM OBEYS? AND SUPPOSE DOOM REFUSES?

THEN... ONE OF US MAY WELL LIVE TO REGRET IT.

INDEED.

I AM NOT GIVEN TO IMPULSIVE DECISIONS. SHALL WE DISCUSS THIS MATTER FURTHER OVER DINNER? MY CHEF SETS A SUPERB TABLE. HE DARES NOT DO OTHERWISE.

A... GRACIOUS INVITATION, LORD DOOM. GRACIOUSLY ACCEPTED.

STORM'S INSIDE THE CASTLE. MAN, THAT LADY HAS GUTS.

AND YOU HAVE GOOD EYES, ANGEL, TO SEE SO CLEARLY FROM SO GREAT A DISTANCE.

THE BEST, PAL. AM I CLOSE ENOUGH?

JA. SEE YOU SOON, *MEIN FREUND.*

WHOUF! WHAT A STINK!

BAMF

*WITH THAT DISTINCTIVE BRIMSTONE STENCH, A CRACK OF FLAME AND THE "BAMF" OF IMPLODING AIR, NIGHT-CRAWLER **TELEPORTS** FROM ANGEL'S ARMS...*

...TO A POINT SLIGHTLY ABOVE THE PARAPET OF DOOM'S CASTLE.

SURPRISE, MEINE HERREN!

THE GUARDS NEVER KNEW WHAT HIT THEM.

ONCE NIGHTCRAWLER HAS ESTABLISHED THIS BEACHHEAD, ANGEL QUICKLY FERRIES WOLVERINE AND COLOSSUS UP TO HIM.

SO FAR, SO GOOD-- BUT I EXPECTED MORE GUARDS.

ACCORDIN' TA THE DATA BEAST SENT US, DOOM'S BEEN KEEPIN' A LOW PROFILE SINCE HE WAS DEPOSED AS RULER OF LATVERIA.* A PRIVATE ARMY WOULD DRAW TOO MUCH ATTENTION FROM THE FEDS.

* THAT OCCURRED WHEN DOOM WAS DRIVEN MAD IN FF#200. HE REGAINED HIS SANITY, AND BEGAN PLOTTING HIS RETURN TO POWER IN FF ANNUAL#15 -- LIBRARIAN LOUISE.

WHEN DOOM LOST HIS THRONE, HE ALSO LOST HIS *DIPLOMATIC IMMUNITY*. HE CAN'T AFFORD TA BE CAUGHT BREAKIN' ANY LAWS.

THEN WHY ABDUCT ARCADE?

I DIDN'T SAY HE *COULDN'T* BREAK THE LAW, COLOSSUS, JUST THAT HE COULDN'T AFFORD TA GET CAUGHT.

ACCORDIN' TA LOCKE'S NOTE, THIS IS ARCADE'S CELL.

IF STORM WERE HERE, SHE COULD PICK THE LOCK.

BUT SINCE SHE IS NOT, *TOVARISCH*...

...ALLOW ME TO TRY A MORE DIRECT METHOD.

EMPTY!

I HAD A FEELIN' THIS CAPER WAS GOIN' DOWN TOO EASY. I THINK WE'VE BEEN SUCKERED.

I THINK YOU'RE RIGHT, SHORTY.

UH-OH.

AS THE QUARTET SNEAKS DEEP INTO THE CASTLE, COLOSSUS AUTOMATICALLY TRANSFORMS HIMSELF FROM FLESH AND BLOOD TO ORGANIC STEEL. IN THIS ARMORED FORM, HE POSSESSES AWESOME POWER AND NEAR-TOTAL INVULNERABILITY. FOR ALL THAT, HE MOVES AS QUICKLY, AS QUIETLY, AS WOLVERINE.

I SUGGEST YOU GIVE UP. THESE BATTLE SUITS WERE DESIGNED TO TRASH THE **FANTASTIC FOUR.**

TRASHIN' YOU FREAKS SHOULD BE CHILD'S-PLAY.

WE AIN'T THE F.F., BUB. WE'RE THE *X-MEN!*

AN' WE DON'T TRASH EASY!

SNIKT!

AS WOLVERINE CHARGES, HE EXTENDS HIS RETRACTABLE **ADAMANTIUM CLAWS** FROM THE BACKS OF HIS HANDS. THEY'RE RAZOR-SHARP AND CAPABLE OF CUTTING VIRTUALLY ANYTHING. ALL HE HAS TO DO IS GET CLOSE ENOUGH TO USE THEM.

IF YOU SAY SO, SHRIMP.

REACTING WITH A BLINDING SPEED THAT BELIES HIS MASSIVE FORM, COLOSSUS LETS FLY WITH HIS IMPROVISED MACE.

HE HITS HARD.

AND DOES ABSOLUTELY NO DAMAGE.

BY THE WHITE WOLF!

HMMM. PERHAPS WE SHOULD HAVE SURRENDERED WHILE WE HAD THE CHANCE.

BUT SINCE WE DIDN'T, NIGHTCRAWLER--

--LET'S TAKE 'EM!

IN THE DUNGEON, THE BATTLE IS JOINED IN EARNEST...

...WHILE, FAR ABOVE, IN THE CASTLE'S DINING ROOM, DOOM'S CHEF MORE THAN LIVES UP TO HIS REPUTATION.

MINE IS A SOLITARY EXISTENCE. I ENTERTAIN RARELY, AND WHEN I DO, I RARELY HAVE A GUEST AS CHARMING AND BEAUTIFUL AS YOU.

THANK YOU, LORD DOOM.

I'M ACTUALLY...ENJOYING THIS-- AND REGRETTING THAT MY SOLE PURPOSE HERE IS TO KEEP DOOM OCCUPIED WHILE MY FELLOW X-MEN FIND AND FREE ARCADE. THEY SHOULD HAVE REACHED HIS CELL BY NOW.

DOOM IS A... FASCINATING MAN.

EXTRAORDINARY. STORM SEEMS DRAWN TO ME, AS I AM TO HER. LIONESS TO LION. QUEEN TO KING.

SHE DOES NOT FEAR ME.

SHE SHOULD. SHE WILL.

I'VE BEEN MONITORING HER COMPANIONS SINCE THEY ENTERED THE CASTLE. I'LL DEAL WITH THEM AT THE PROPER TIME...

...AFTER I'VE DEALT WITH THEIR LOVELY LEADER.

TEAMWORK, X-MEN! DON'T FIGHT 'EM ONE-ON-ONE!

CONFUSE 'EM! TURN THEIR OWN WEAPONS AGAINST THEM!

I'M SNAGGED! BUT WHILE THIS GOON HAS ME, I'VE ALSO GOT *HIM*! WE'RE *BOTH* IMMOBILIZED.

WOLVERINE-- HE'S YOURS!

WAY AHEAD OF YA, WINGS!

FIRST I'LL CUT YA LOOSE.

THEN I'LL OPEN UP THIS TIN SUIT...

...AN' PUNCH THE LIGHTS OUTTA WHO-EVER'S INSIDE.

OUR ASBESTOS NETS HAVE SNARED THE "DEMON."

HE'LL NEVER UNTANGLE HIMSELF IN TIME.

BLAST HIM!

THE BATTLE SUITS FIRE AS ONE...

BAMF

...AND THE INSTANT THEY DO, NIGHTCRAWLER WITH A JAUNTY GRIN AND A WAVE--

--TELEPORTS.

THE SUITS ARE RUINED, THE MEN INSIDE STUNNED UNCONSCIOUS.

THREE DOWN...

...ONE TO GO.

IT-- IT'S IMPOSSIBLE! THESE SUITS WERE SUPPOSED TO MAKE US INVINCIBLE!

BACK TA THE DRAWIN' BOARD, EH, BUB?

WOLVERINE LUNGES, AND THE GOON DECIDES THAT DISCRETION IS INDEED THE BETTER PART OF VALOR.

HE PRAYS HIS MASTER WILL UNDERSTAND THE NECESSITY FOR HIS "STRATEGIC WITHDRAWAL".

THE COWARD EVIDENTLY FEARED THE X-MEN MORE THAN ME.

I MUST TEACH HIM THE ERROR OF HIS WAYS. HIS...PUNISHMENT SHOULD PROVE A SUFFICIENT OBJECT LESSON FOR HIS COMRADES. IN DOOM'S SERVICE, THERE IS ONLY VICTORY OR DEATH. NEVER DEFEAT.

YOU ARE NOT MY ONLY GUEST, STORM.

ALLOW ME TO PRESENT-- *ARCADE*.

I BELIEVE YOU KNOW EACH OTHER.

THAT'S A FACT, VIC, THOUGH WE'VE NEVER BEEN FORMALLY INTRODUCED.

HOW DO, SWEET THING.

YOU! A-- "GUEST?!" NOT A PRISONER!?!

NO!!

IT WAS A TRAP-- FROM THE VERY BEGINNING-- AND I LED THE X-MEN INTO IT! HOW COULD I HAVE BEEN SO BLIND?!

RAW LIGHTNING EXPLODES FROM STORM'S OUTSTRETCHED HAND.

DOOM IS STAGGERED BY THE FEROCITY OF HER ATTACK...

...BUT THAT IS ALL.

AN ADMIRABLE TRY, STORM. AND AN ADMIRABLE PLAN AS WELL.

AGAINST A LESSER FOE, BOTH MIGHT HAVE SUCCEEDED. BUT I AM DOOM. I HAVE FORGOTTEN MORE ABOUT STRATEGY AND COMBAT THAN YOU ARE EVER LIKELY TO LEARN.

YOU ARE AN ENCHANTING CHILD, MY DEAR. BUT THAT IS ALL YOU--AND YOUR FELLOW X-MEN--ARE.

CHILDREN.

THAT GLOBE--IT'S TRACKING ME! I CAN'T EVADE IT! AND THE WINDS I'M GENERATING AROUND ME CAN'T BLOW IT AWAY!

AAAIIII!!

MY ARM'S GONE *NUMB!*

SENSATIONS--FIRE AND ICE, SO INTENSE, ABSOLUTE AGONY AND...ECSTASY--SHOOTING THROUGH MY ENTIRE BODY!

GODDESS!

MY HAND--MY FOREARM--HAS TURNED TO *CHROME!*

WHAT HAS DOOM *DONE* TO ME?!?

HER CONCENTRATION SHATTERED, STORM LOSES CONTROL OF THE WINDS THAT HELD HER ALOFT AND DROPS TO THE FLOOR. AS SHE LANDS THE TERRIFYING TRANSFORMATION SWEEPS UP HER ARM, ACROSS HER SHOULDERS, DOWN HER SIDE.

IN THE LITERAL BLINK OF AN EYE...

...IT'S OVER.

A MOMENT LATER--A MINUTE TOO LATE--

--STORM'S FELLOW X-MEN ARRIVE...

...TO BE JUST AS QUICKLY, AS EASILY DEFEATED.

THEY ARE VERY BRAVE, ARCADE, BUT VERY FOOLISH. I ALMOST FEEL SORRY FOR THEM.

I DID NOT THINK ANYONE IN THE WORLD WOULD UNDER-ESTIMATE ME, YET THEY DID.

FEEL SORRY FOR *YOURSELF*, BUTCHER!

YOUR ENERGY WEAPONS HAD NO EFFECT ON *ME*!

I AM GOING TO RIP YOUR ARMOR FROM YOU PIECE BY PIECE, DOOM.

AND WHEN I AM FINISHED WITH YOU, IT WILL BE *ARCADE'S* TURN.

DOOM DOES NOT ENGAGE IN FISTICUFFS, YOUTH.

YEARRRGH!!

ALL I NEED DO IS USE A *NEURAL DISRUPTOR* TO SCRAMBLE THE MOTOR NEURONS OF YOUR ARMORED BODY.

THE EFFECT IS TEMPORARY, BUT UNTIL IT WEARS OFF...

...YOU WILL BE COMPLETELY PARALYZED...

...AS MUCH A LIVING STATUE AS STORM.

YOU HAVE ENTERED THE LION'S DEN, X-MEN.

YOU WILL NOT LEAVE IT ALIVE.

NEXT ISSUE • **MURDERWORLD** •• A LOVELY PLACE TO DIE!

X-MAIL

c/o MARVEL COMICS GROUP
575 Madison Avenue
New York, New York 10022

LOUISE JONES
EDITOR
DANNY FINGEROTH
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Last issue, we announced — with pardonable pride — that X-MEN had, once again, fared extremely well in the annual Eagle awards, voted by the comic fans of Great Britain. Now, we have details. Favorite Artist: John Byrne. Favorite Writer: Chris Claremont. Favorite Inker: Terry Austin. Favorite Comic Book: X-MEN. Favorite Character: Wolverine. Favorite Group or Team: X-Men. Favorite Villain: Magneto. Favorite Continued Story: X-MEN #'s 125-128 (the "Proteus" saga. Out of 14 categories, X-MEN took top honors in 8, and placed second in two more. Once again, our sincere thanks both to the fans who supported X-Men — and, one hopes — support it still, and to the sponsors of the Eagle Awards: Richard Burton, Colin Campbell and Mike Conroy (plus others too numerous to name).

Moving right along, some of you may have by now noticed a new — but familiar — hand on X-MEN's artistic helm. It belongs to Dave Cockrum, who six (very) odd years ago, in a fit of delerium, co-created this book. He hasn't been quite the same since. Neither, for that matter, have I. Three years ago, he decided that enough was enough and left X-MEN for greener pastures. Now, though, Dave's back, and producing some of the best work of his career — aided and abetted by Josef Rubinstein, an inker who compliments Dave's pencils as effectively as Terry Austin did John Byrne's. Consider this Doc Doom story — beautiful though it looks — just a warm-up, folks, 'cause we've got Magneto waiting just around the corner and the Starjammers down the street. If you think the X-MEN have led a wild'n'crazy life up to now — hoo-hah (to coin a phrase), you ain't seen NOTHIN' yet!

— chris claremont

Dear Chris & John,

Because of recent events and a comic book that is the state of the art, I write this letter to the X-MEN.

John Lennon was shot yesterday and in some strange way I felt those bullets, too, as I'm sure you did. When Jean Grey died, that strange feeling of loss was there, too — not as bad, of course, but it was there

Lennon did his part when it came to stopping a war, but a lot of us didn't want to get involved. Jean Grey saved the whole damn world, but once more, what could we do? No holiday has been called for John Lennon and in the fantasy world of the X-MEN, no holiday will be had for Ms. Grey either.

Somewhere the unparallel lines of fantasy and real life come dangerously close to touching. When these lines touch we have people like Lee Harvey Oswald and the Mark Chapmans of this world. We have no super heroes to protect us, except those who change our lives and change us from a different fate. John Lennon wore no cape, but he was a hero.

Michael McCarthy
(no address)

Amen to that, Michael. And if we all try to live our lives with half the dignity and grace and concern for others that Lennon did, then perhaps his death won't be wasted. The dreamer dies, the dream goes on.

Dear Marvel,

Wolverine and Nightcrawler's discussion where Wolverine states he takes life only in defense of himself or someone else (#140) and Nightcrawler replies, "Yes, but does that make it right?" is the same debate I had with a pacifist pen-friend once. Buddhism has the concept of the Buddha, or Enlightened One, vs. the Bodhisattva (or someone who refuses Enlightenment until all others are enlightened). So. Shall we resort to violence to save life or shall we keep our own hands clean and to heck with the rest of mankind?

Look at WW II. War is wrong. Killing is wrong. Now take a hard look at Auschwitz and say that again. Let someone else be a pacifist. Like the Bodhisattva,I will refuse this enlightenment (pacifism)until the rest of mankind are pacifists, because I believe we are not only responsible for our acts, but also for the consequences of our acts. In Wolverine's place, I would have answered, "It might not be right but that's the best choice." Sometimes there are no "right" choices available.

By the way, someone quotes Tolkein regarding Jean Grey, but they missed the best words — those of Galadriel upon refusal of the One: "I pass the test. I will diminish and pass into the West — and remain Galadriel."

Pam Siegfried
1200 W. Dimond Sp. 608
Anchorage, AK 99502

Pam, I've thought of Auschwitz — what it was, how it came to be, what it means for me as a person, us as a race — all my adult life. (You see, before I got sidetracked into comics, I'd set out to become a historian and political theorist.) The statements stand: war *is* wrong, killing *is* wrong. Just because there may be no alternative does not mean we should not first seek one. Violence frequently seems the simplest solution to a problem or threat, as it is often the easiest and most emotionally satisfying. But being "civilized" — perhaps, even being human — carries with it the responsibility to at least be *aware* of another path, even if circumstances preclude our following it. In a sense, Nightcrawler was echoing your own beliefs — by reminding Wolverine, however subtly, of the consequences of his acts. Logan holds in his claws, in himself, the power of life and death over those he fights. That is something he must never forget, something he should never treat casually. For if he — or by extension, we — take a life casually, without thought or care, if this supreme gift means so little to us, then all our claims to civilization, all our culture, all our beliefs, aren't really worth a plugged nickel.

— chris claremont 12/80

NEXT ISSUE: While half the X-MEN remain trapped in Dr. Doom's castle, the other half (Havok, Polaris, Iceman and Banshee) have the delightful task of finding Murderworld, penetrating it, and freeing Ms. Locke's hostages. Return with us then, in 30 days, to Arcade's assassination amusement park — to see if the X-Men survive, much less triumph.

— csc

THE MIGHTY MARVEL CHECKLIST

☐ **MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE #75** — ***Double-sized 75th anniversary ish*** featuring the ***Thing*** and the ***Avengers*** vs. Annihilus, Blastaar, and the Super-Adaptoid in the Negative Zone!

☐ **SPIDER-WOMAN #38** — Guest-starring the ***X-Men!***

☐ **STAR TREK #14** — "We Are Dying, Egypt, Dying!"

☐ **MARVEL SUPER HEROES #97** — (Reprinting Hulk #148) The Return of Jarella! Plus: The Inedible Bulk!

☐ **DAZZLER #3** — Dazz at the mercy of... ***Doctor Doom!***

☐ **KA-ZAR #2** — Ka-Zar and Shanna must rescue the kidnapped Leanne!

☐ **DAREDEVIL #170** — ***Now on sale monthly!*** Bullseye vs. the Kingpin with DD caught in the middle!

☐ **SPIDEY SUPER STORIES #52** — Easy readin' super hero pleasure for discriminating younger readers.

☐ **CONAN #122** — "The City Where Time Stood Still!"

☐ **ROM #18** — ROM vs. the ***X-Men.*** 'Nuff said!

☐ **AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #216** — The most off-beat Spidey tale of the year: *"Marathon!"*

☐ **CAPTAIN AMERICA #257** — Cap vs. the ***Hulk!***

☐ **MICRONAUTS #29** — Doc Samson sends the Micros into Rann's brain where they are ambushed by... Nightmare!

☐ **GHOST RIDER #56** — The vengeance of Moondark the Magician!

☐ **SAVAGE SHE-HULK #16** — Beware the Microwaves!

☐ **THOR #307** — The terrifying, nightmare-powered Dream Demon! Plus: Loki!

☐ **MOON KNIGHT #7** — "The Moon Kings!"

☐ **INCREDIBLE HULK #259** — Ol' Greenskin and a Soviet super-team take on Russia's deadliest super villains!

☐ **AVENGERS #207** — He's called the Shadow Lord and to save the Earth, he must destroy the Avengers! Why?

☐ **MARVEL TEAM-UP #105** — ***Hulk, Power Man*** and ***Iron Fist*** — *together!*

☐ **IRON MAN #146** — The way-out weaponry of... Blacklash!

☐ **MARVEL TALES #127** — (Reprints Spider-Man #150) Spidey attacked by all his fiercest foes at once! Plus: The Inhumans.

☐ **X-MEN #145** — The riotous return of the new X-Men's original artist: *Dave Cockrum!* Plus: ***Doc Doom,*** the *old X-Men,* Arcade and Murderworld!

☐ **POWER MAN/IRON FIST #69** — Luke and the Fist on the trail of a mercenary gone mad!

☐ **MAN-THING #10** — A bizarre stranger wreaks havoc with the lives of Barbie Bannister, the Kales, John Daltry and... the Man-Thing!

☐ **FANTASTIC FOUR #230** — Final confrontation with the Ebon Seeker!

☐ **MARVEL SUPER ACTION #31** — (Reprints Avengers #70) Showdown with the Squadron Sinister and the Grandmaster! Plus: Marvel U.K.'s ***Hulk!***

☐ **STAR WARS #47** — *"Droid World!"*

☐ **MASTER OF KUNG FU #100** — ***Special double-sized 100th anniversary issue!*** A mad plot hatched decades ago by Fu Manchu stretches across time to menace Shang Chi today!

☐ **PETER PARKER #54** — Spidey puts his life on the line to save the Smuggler from Maggia assassins!

☐ **DEFENDERS #95** — Enter: ***Count Dracula!***

☐ **MARVEL SPOTLIGHT #12** — Spotlight on: ***Captain Marvel!***

MARVEL MAGAZINES

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MARVEL® COMICS GROUP

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THE UNCANNY X-MEN™

vs. MURDERWORLD!

GUESS WHO WINS?

COCKRUM/RUBINSTEIN

Cyclops. Storm. Nightcrawler. Wolverine. Colossus. Children of the atom, students of Charles Xavier, MUTANTS — feared and hated by the world they have sworn to protect. These are the STRANGEST heroes of all!

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE UNCANNY X-MEN!™

MURDERWORLD!

THE WOMAN IS **STORM**, LEADER OF THE UNCANNY X-MEN, A TEAM OF MUTANT SUPER-HEROES. THE MAN IS **VICTOR VON DOOM**,- DEPOSED RULER OF LATVERIA, A TINY BALKAN MONARCHY. SIX HOURS AGO, SHE LED HER FELLOW X-MEN NORTH TO DOOM'S CASTLE -- IN THE ADIRONDAK MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS OF UPSTATE NEW YORK-- TO RESCUE **ARCADE**, ONE OF THE X-MEN'S OLD FOES, HELD PRISONER BY DOOM UNDER A SENTENCE OF DEATH. THE BATTLE WAS BRIEF, FIERCE--THE OUTCOME NEVER REALLY IN DOUBT.

THE X-MEN LOST.

FASCINATING. THE FORECAST WAS FOR CLEAR WEATHER, YET IN A MATTER OF HOURS THIS STORM APPEARED FROM NOWHERE-- FREEZING TEMPERATURES, RAIN, GALE-FORCE WINDS-- AND IT IS GETTING STEADILY WORSE.

ACCORDING TO ARCADE, STORM IS A WEATHER-WITCH. COULD THIS BE *HER* DOING?

CHRIS CLAREMONT WRITER | DAVE COCKRUM & JOSEF RUBINSTEIN ARTISTS

TOM ORZECHOWSKI, letterer | LOUISE JONES EDITOR | JIM SHOOTER EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
GLYNIS WEIN, colorist

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IT'S A PITY SHE'S NO LONGER CAPABLE OF TELLING ME.

ORORO, I SHOULD LIKE SOME MULLED WINE. BRING A CUP FOR MY GUEST AS WELL.

AS YOU COMMAND, LORD DOOM.

WHY THE LONG FACE, ARCADE? SURELY YOU'VE FACED DEFEAT BEFORE?

NEVER WHEN MY OWN BUTT WAS ON THE LINE, VIC.

ARCADE, LACK OF THE PROPER RESPECT TOWARDS ME...

...GOT YOU INTO THIS PREDICAMENT IN THE FIRST PLACE.

DON'T PUSH YOUR LUCK.

I BEEN DOIN' THAT SINCE THE DAY I WAS BORN, DOC. I'M A HIGH STAKES PLAYER-- THE HIGHER, THE BETTER. *PLAYIN'* A DYNAMITE GAME IS A LOT MORE FUN TA ME THAN WINNIN' IT.

I AIN'T ABOUT TA CHANGE.

I JUST EXPECTED BETTER FROM THE X-MEN.

YOU THOUGHT DOOM COULD BE OVERCOME BY A RAGTAG COLLECTION OF ***CHILDREN?*** TRULY, ARCADE, YOUR ARROGANCE RIVALS MY OWN.

BIG TALK, VIC, FROM A MAN WITHOUT A COUNTRY. TELL ME, HOW MANY TIMES HAVE YOU BEATEN THE FANTASTIC FOUR IN YORE "ILLUSTRIOUS" CAREER, *hm?!*

TOUCHÉ.

YOU'RE AN HONEST MAN, MY FRIEND, ALBEIT AN INFURIATING ONE. I FIND THAT QUALITY REFRESHING.

CONTINUE TO AMUSE ME, AND YOU SHALL CONTINUE TO LIVE.

I'M AN ASSASSIN, DOOM, NOT SOME COURT JESTER.

YOU ARE... WHATEVER I CHOOSE TO MAKE YOU.

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE X-MEN? I SAW YOUR FLUNKIES CART 'EM AWAY.

I THOUGHT YOU'D NEVER ASK. BEHOLD.

THEY'RE NOT DEAD?

OF COURSE NOT. I DO NOTHING PRECIPITOUSLY, ARCADE, ESPECIALLY KILL.

I HAVE NEVER MET THE X-MEN BEFORE. THEIR POWERS ARE NEW TO ME. I WISH TO EXAMINE THEM-- LEARN THEIR STRENGTHS, THEIR WEAKNESSES, HOW THEY FIGHT AND THINK.

THAT CELL WON'T HOLD *NIGHTCRAWLER*, Y'KNOW.

HE CAN *TELEPORT* OUTTA THERE ANYTIME.

PERHAPS.

THIS CELL IS A FEATURELESS CUBE.

I HAVE NO IDEA OF WHERE IT IS, OR WHAT'S OUTSIDE.

THIS IS A FIENDISHLY SIMPLE TRAP. IF I TELEPORT *"BLIND"*-- WITHOUT KNOWING WHERE I'M GOING -- I COULD MATERIALIZE INSIDE SOMETHING SOLID: ROCK, GROUND, PART OF THE CASTLE, A PERSON, ANYTHING.

THE RESULTANT PHYSICAL DISRUPTION WOULD KILL ME INSTANTLY.

*"EACH X-MAN FACES A TEST," DOOM TELLS ARCADE AS HIS PAINTING/LIQUID-CRYSTAL DISPLAY SCREEN SWITCHES SCENES FROM NIGHTCRAWLER'S CELL TO **COLOSSUS**':*

"EACH TEST HAS AN ESCAPE ROUTE. BUT FINDING-- AND USING --THAT ROUTE WILL REQUIRE THE ULTIMATE COMBINATION OF THEIR ABILITIES AND THEIR INTELLECT. THE SLIGHTEST MISTAKE WILL COST THEM THEIR LIVES."

I AWOKE ON THIS ROCK. THEN, THE WHIRLPOOL WAS FAR BELOW ME.

BUT IT HAS BEEN STEADILY EATING AWAY AT THE ROCK. THERE IS NOW VERY LITTLE LEFT.

THE ROOF OF THE CELL IS OUT OF REACH. I CANNOT ESCAPE THAT WAY. HOWEVER, IN MY ARMORED FORM, I DO NOT BREATHE. WHY NOT SIMPLY LET THE WHIRLPOOL DRAG ME DOWN...'

...TO WHERE I CAN SMASH THROUGH THE FLOOR TO FREEDOM?

WAIT! THOSE FLASHES OF LIGHT IN THE WATER--BY THE WHITE WOLF!

"ENERGY BLASTERS-- LINING THE BOTTOM OF THIS CHAMBER-- PULVERISING ANYTHING CAUGHT IN THE WHIRLPOOL. THERE ARE SO MANY-- AND THEY LOOK SO POWERFUL--

"--THEY MIGHT BE CAPABLE OF INJURING ME. OR WORSE. WHAT AM I TO DO NOW?!"

THEN THE LCD DISPLAY SHIFTS TO WOLVERINE...

I'M IN SOME KIND'A ZERO-GRAVITY CHAMBER. DOOM'S REPLACED MY COSTUME, TOO. *

CONSIDERATE OF HIM. HE PROBABLY DON'T WANT ANY "*NAKED SAVAGES*" RUNNIN' AROUND HIS PRECIOUS CHATEAU.

** DESTROYED IN LAST ISSUE'S BATTLE--LOUISE.*

THESE FLAMIN' OP-ART WALLS ARE SCRAMBLIN' MY SENSES, DISORIENTING ME. I GOT NO IDEA HOW BIG THIS ROOM IS, OR HOW CLOSE I AM TA THE WALLS.

AN' EVERY TIME I MOVE--EVEN SO MUCH AS A TWITCH -- I TRIGGER A PSYCHEDELIC LIGHT-SHOW THAT DARN NEAR BLOWS MY HEAD APART.

IT'S MAKIN' ME CRAZY. THE HARDER I TRY TA STAY IN CONTROL, THE WORSE EV'RYTHING GETS-- ***HUH?!***

I HIT SOMETHING-- A ***WALL!***

UNFORTUNATELY, BEFORE WOLVERINE CAN ACT ON HIS DISCOVERY...

THE REPELLOR FIELDS BUILT INTO THE WALLS AUTOMATICALLY BOUNCE WOLVERINE FROM ONE END OF THE CELL TO THE OTHER...

CRIPES!

...HIS WAYWARD FLIGHT PROVOKING MORE--AND INCREASINGLY MORE INTENSE--LIGHTSHOWS. WITH EVERY PASSING SECOND, HE FEELS HIS ALREADY TENUOUS HOLD ON SANITY SLOWLY, INEXORABLY, SLIP AWAY.

THEN THE FOCUS SHIFTS TO ANGEL...

TYPICAL. WHAT MORE "APPROPRIATE" PLACE FOR A WINGED MUTANT THAN A GIANT BIRDCAGE.

NO BARS ON THE WINDOWS, THOUGH, AND NO GUARDS.

LET'S SEE WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I TRY TO FLY AWAY.

HOLY--!

LASERS! FIRIN' IN A RANDOM PATTERN ALL AROUND ME!

MY WING!

MY ARM!

IT'S NO GOOD. THERE ARE TOO MANY LASERS-- FIRING TOO FAST, FROM TOO MANY DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS-- I HAVEN'T A PRAYER OF EVADING THEM ALL.

THIS PERCH SEEMS TO BE NEUTRAL TERRITORY. SO LONG AS I STAY HERE, THE LASERS DON'T FIRE. I'M SAFE. LUCKY ME.

THOSE ARE MODERATE INTENSITY WEAPONS, SET TO HURT MORE THAN KILL. A COUPLE OR THREE HITS WON'T DO MUCH DAMAGE-- UNLESS THEY SEVER MY SPINAL CORD. IT'S THE CUMULATIVE EFFECT THAT'S DEADLY.

WHY DO IT LIKE THAT-- UNLESS... DOOM'S GIVING ME A CHOICE. STAY WHERE I AM OR RISK EVERYTHING BY FLYING HIS LASER GAUNTLET.

I HAVE HEARD MUCH OF THE X-MEN. TONIGHT, I GIVE THEM AN OPPORTUNITY TO PROVE THEIR METTLE.

YOUR WINE, LORD DOOM.

STORM!

I DON'T BELIEVE IT! I THOUGHT YOU'D--SHE'D--!

OF THEM ALL, ONLY CYCLOPS-- AN' MAYBE WOLVERINE, THE LITTLE PSYCHO-- EQUALLED HER INDOMITABLE WILL. YET YOU'VE MADE HER THE PERFECT SERVANT.

HOW'D YOU DO IT?

THERE IS VERY LITTLE I *CANNOT* DO, ARCADE.

BUT YOU SPOKE TRUER THAN YOU KNEW...

...WHEN YOU SAID I "*MADE*" HER.

OKAY, I'M IMPRESSED. WHERE'S THE REAL THING?

HERE. MY METABOLIC TRANSMUTER TRANSFORMED ORORO INTO ORGANIC CHROME.

IN SUBTANCE, SHE IS NOT UNLIKE THE ORGANIC STEEL THAT COMPRISES COLOSSUS ARMORED FORM. EXCEPT THAT HIS LIFE PROCESSES ARE NORMAL, WHILE HERS HAVE BEEN SLOWED TO ALMOST NOTHING. HE CAN MOVE. SHE CANNOT.

CRUEL, DOC. TOO CRUEL.

I WISH *I'D* THOUGHT OF IT.

I HAVE SPARED THE CHILD THE RAVAGES OF AGE. SHE WILL LIVE-- AND REMAIN BEAUTIFUL-- FOREVER.

WHEN ORORO WAS A CHILD, SHE WAS BURIED ALIVE. THAT TRAUMA...

...LEFT HER INCURABLE CLAUSTROPHOBIC.

SHE CAN STAND ANYTHING, SAVE CONFINEMENT.

YET THIS TRANSFORMATION INTO A STATUE IS PERHAPS THE **ULTIMATE** CONFINEMENT, HER WORST NIGHTMARE COME TRUE.

SO, FACED WITH WHAT SHE PERCEIVES AS A PRIMAL THREAT, SHE SUMMONS AN EQUALLY PRIMAL RESPONSE.

HER METALLOID FORM INHIBITS CONSCIOUS THOUGHT, BUT HER **SUB-CONSCIOUS** IS FREE TO ACT.

IT MANIFESTS HER NEED TO BE FREE THROUGH HER MUTANT ABILITY TO CONTROL THE WEATHER BY CREATING AN INSATIABLE DEMAND FOR POWER. TO GET IT, SHE WARPS WEATHER PATTERNS OVER A VAST, EVER-INCREASING AREA.

SHE DOES NOT CARE. SHE WILL BE FREE, OR DIE.

THE EFFECTS ARE CENTERED ON DOOM'S CASTLE -- BUT THEY ARE FELT AS FAR AFIELD AS THE EAST INDIES, WHERE HER LIGHTNING BOLT BRIEFLY TURNS THE NIGHT TO DAY...

...OVER A SMALL, UNCHARTED ISLE.

ON THAT ISLAND, HUDDLED TOGETHER, TRYING TO FIND WHAT SHELTER THEY CAN FROM THIS ELDRITCH TEMPEST, ARE **SCOTT SUMMERS** -- WHO, AS **CYCLOPS**, WAS STORM'S PREDECESSOR AS THE X-MEN'S LEADER -- AND **ALEYTYS FORRESTER**, CAPTAIN/OWNER OF THE TRAWLER, "ARCADIA."

IT SOUNDS BAD, LEE.

IT *IS* BAD, SCOTT. I'VE NEVER SEEN WEATHER LIKE THIS.

THESE FALLEN TREES SHIELD US FROM THE WIND BUT IF THE RAIN DOESN'T DROWN US, WE'LL PROBABLY FREEZE TO DEATH BY MORNING.

YEAH. WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE WARM, SUNNY CARIBBE --

EEEYOW!

SCOTT!

MY BLIND-FOLD!

GOOD LORD!

THE IMPACT JARS SCOTT'S EYES OPEN AND, FOR A MOMENT, UNTIL HE CLOSES THEM AGAIN...

...THERE IS NOTHING TO RESTRAIN THE AWESOME, NIGH-IRRESISTIBLE POWER OF HIS **OPTIC BLAST.**

LEE, GET BEHIND ME!

WITHOUT MY RUBY QUARTZ GLASSES TO CONTROL MY OPTIC BLASTS, I'VE NO CHOICE BUT TO BLINDFOLD MY EYES SHUT.

WHERE IS IT? OH, LORD--SUPPOSE THE WIND'S BLOWN IT AWAY?!

RELAX, SCOTT. DON'T MOVE. I HAVE YOUR BLINDFOLD. I'LL HAVE YOUR EYES TIED SHUT IN A HURRY.

TH-THANKS. I GUESS I OWE YOU AN EXPLANATION.

I GUESS YOU DO. BUT IT CAN WAIT 'TIL THIS STORM'S OVER. IF WE LIVE THAT LONG.

ON THAT NOTE, LET'S TURN THE CLOCK BACK HALF-A-DOZEN HOURS AND RETURN TO THE ENVIRONS OF NEW YORK CITY.

IT'S SUNSET. UPSTATE, STORM'S TEAM IS BEGINNING ITS ILL-FATED ASSAULT ON DOOM'S CASTLE. HERE, ANOTHER GROUP OF X-MEN-- **HAVOK, POLARIS, BANSHEE** AND **ICEMAN**--SEEK ARCADE'S HIDDEN BASE, HIS ASSASSINATION AMUSEMENT PARK; **MURDERWORLD.**

THIS DERELICT PARK IS WHERE ARCADE RELEASED THE X-MEN AFTER THEIR LAST BATTLE.* LOGICALLY, THERE SHOULD BE UNDERGROUND CONNECTIONS BETWEEN IT AND MURDERWORLD.

POLARIS, IT'S UP TO YOU TO FIND THEM.

*X-MEN #'S 123-124 -- L.

LORNA DANE CONCENTRATES, REFINING AND FOCUSING HER AWARENESS OF THE WORLD AROUND HER UNTIL SHE PERCEIVES IT SOLELY AS PATTERNS OF MAGNETIC AND ELECTRICAL ENERGY.

THAT DONE, IT BECOMES A RELATIVELY SIMPLE MATTER FOR HER TO LOCATE THE ENERGY PATTERNS CLUSTERED BENEATH THE AMUSEMENT PARK AND TRACE THEM BACK...

...TO THEIR SOURCE.

PHEW! TRUST ARCADE TO BURY MURDERWORLD BENEATH A DUMP. WHAT A *STENCH!*

NORTH BEAC LANDFILL PRO KEEP OU

SADISTIC, BUT IN CHARACTER.

YE'VE CHANGED OUTFITS SINCE LAST I SAW YE, HAVEN'T YE, LORNA DARLIN'?

I HAVE, INDEED, BANSHEE. THE OLD ONE WAS PRETTY, BUT THIS ONE IS INSULATED.

WHAT'S'A MATTER, POLARIS? YOU GOT SOMETHING AGAINST THE COLD? ME, I LOVE IT.

TO EACH THEIR OWN, ICEMAN.

THIS IS OUR LAST CHANCE T' RECONSIDER. ARCADE'S LADY, *MISS LOCKE,* IS HOLDIN' OUR LOVED ONES HOSTAGE IN MURDERWORLD. OUR ATTACK COULD SIGN THEIR DEATH WARRANTS.

IT'S A RISK WE HAVE TO TAKE, BANSHEE.

SHE'S USING THEM TO BLACKMAIL THE X-MEN, SEAN, REMEMBER? IF WE RESCUE ARCADE FROM DOOM, SHE'LL RELEASE THEM. BUT SUPPOSE SHE DOESN'T? IF BLACKMAIL WORKS ONCE, WHY NOT TWICE? WE CAN'T LET HER GET AWAY WITH THIS--

--WHATEVER THE COST.

SUDDENLY, HAVOK GLOWS LIKE A SMALL STAR...

...AS HE DRAWS COSMIC ENERGY FROM THE VERY AIR AROUND HIM AND METABOLIZES IT INTO BEAMS OF RAW POWER THAT GOUGE A PATH INTO THE EARTH WITH DISCONCERTING EASE.

DON'T WORRY, BANSHEE. MOIRA MacTAGGERT AND THE OTHERS'LL BE ALL RIGHT. YOU'LL SEE.

AYE, LAD. I HOPE AN' PRAY SO.

A HUNDRED METERS BELOW...

WE'VE ARRIVED, TROOPS.

THE MOMENT I BREACH THIS SHIELD WALL, I'LL PROBABLY SET OFF EVERY ALARM IN THE PLACE. YOU'LL HAVE TO ACT FAST, POLARIS.

THIS GOOD ENOUGH FOR YOU, OH FEARLESS LEADER?

IN THE TWINKLING OF AN EYE, POLARIS OVERLOADS AND SHORT-CIRCUITS EVERY ELECTRICAL SYSTEM IN THE COMPLEX.

NOT TOO SHABBY. I DOUBT MAGNETO HIMSELF COULD HAVE DONE BETTER.

IN WE GO, GROUP. LET'S PRESS OUR ADVANTAGE WHILE WE'VE GOT IT.

WELCOME BACK, BANSHEE. I SEE YOU'VE BROUGHT SOME NEW PLAY-MATES WITH YOU. HOW THOUGHTFUL.

I AM MISS LOCKE.

A HOLOGRAM!

IMPOSSIBLE! I DESTROYED EVERY CIRCUIT. THIS COMPLEX SHOULD BE DEAD!

I'M AFRAID NOT, MY DEAR. AS YOU'LL SOON DISCOVER.

WELCOME TO MURDERWORLD, X-MEN.

POP

...WHERE NOBODY EVER SURVIVES.

HEY!

TRAP DOORS!

WE'RE BEIN' *SEPARATED*-- JUST LIKE LAST TIME!

IT'S BEEN AGES SINCE I LAST USED MY SUPER-POWERS IN A FIGHT...

... AND THIS TIME, I'LL BE ON MY OWN. NICE.

I'M GLAD MY BROTHER, SCOTT, ISN'T HERE TO SEE THIS. SOME LEADER I'M TURNING OUT TO BE.

WHAT HAPPENED?! DID MY POWERS FAIL-- OR WAS I OVERCONFIDENT?!

ELSEWHERE, IN MURDER-WORLD'S CONTROL ROOM...

STATUS REPORT, MISTER CHAMBERS.

BACK-UP SYSTEMS FULLY OPERATIONAL, MISS LOCKE. BUT IT WAS A NEAR THING. THE SHIELDS BARELY HELD AGAINST POLARIS' STRIKE. THEY WON'T SURVIVE ANOTHER LIKE IT.

THEY WON'T HAVE TO.

WHY?! BECAUSE SHE'LL BE DEAD?!

PRECISELY, Ms. HUNTER. WOULD YOU CARE TO JOIN HER?

YOUR LIVES WERE FORFEIT THE INSTANT THE X-MEN ATTACKED.

DEAD, WE'RE OF NO USE TO YOU.

FRIGHTENED, YET DEFIANT. I LIKE THAT.

AND YOU'RE QUITE RIGHT-- FOR THE MOMENT. SHOULD CONDI-TIONS CHANGE, HOWEVER, YOU'LL BE THE *FIRST* TO KNOW.

HAVOK.

END OF THE LINE. BUT WHERE THE BLAZES AM I?

AND WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?!

THIS ROCKET-SLED LOOKS LIKE SOME SORT OF CRAZY ROLLER-COASTER SET-UP.

XLS

BATTLE STAR WARS 90

THE ENGINES ARE FIRING! THE ROCKET'S MOVING!!

WITH THAT THOUGHT, HAVOK IS SMASHED BACKWARDS INTO HIS SEAT BY THE SLED'S SUDDEN, BRUTAL ACCELERATION.

HE SOON DISCOVERS, HOWEVER, THAT HIS CRAFT'S VIOLENT, UNPREDICTABLE COURSE REPRESENTS THE LEAST OF HIS PROBLEMS.

THIS IS RIDICULOUS. I'M FLYING-- RACING-- THROUGH THE MIDDLE OF A SPACE BATTLE. AND I SEEM TO BE EVERYONE'S FAVORITE TARGET.

I MUST BE INSIDE A GIANT HOLOGRAM FIELD-- HEY! THAT ENERGY BOLT WAS *REAL*!

SOME OF THESE TINY SPACECRAFT ARE THE HOLOFIELD'S 3-DIMENSIONAL ILLUSIONS...

...BUT OTHERS ARE REAL, AND DEADLY.

AND I CAN'T TELL WHICH IS WHICH.

I HAVE TO ASSUME THEY'RE *ALL* REAL AND BLAST EVERYTHING I SEE. TROUBLE IS-- JUST LIKE IN A VIDEO GAME--THE MORE I ZAP, THE MORE COME AFTER ME. I'M HARD-PRESSED AS IT IS. WHAT DO I DO IF THINGS GET WORSE?

I THINK THINGS JUST GOT WORSE.

ICEMAN.

≫OUCH!≪

AND TO THINK I COULD BE AT SCHOOL, ROMANCING SHEILA DELANEY, THE CUTE LADY FROM THE DORM NEXT DOOR.

ROMANCING--*HAH!* MORE LIKELY, I'D BE STUDYING FOR MONDAY'S ECONOMICS QUIZ. WHY, OH WHY DID I HAVE TO GROW UP TO BE SO DARNED CONSCIENTIOUS???

I'M IN AN ICE RINK. NICE OF MISS LOCKE TO DUMP ME INTO MY OWN ELEMENT.

SO HOW COME I DON'T FEEL REASSURED?

WHOOPS! FROM THE SOUND OF THINGS, THIS ICE IS WAFER-THIN.

AND, AS IF THAT WASN'T ENOUGH, HERE COMES THE OPPOSITION.

ANDROID A

KRRRAAK!

AN ICE WALL SHOULD STOP 'EM.

THESE BOZOS MAKE THE RANGERS LOOK GOOD. THEY CHARGED RIGHT INTO IT.

I DON'T LIKE IT. THINGS ARE GOING MY WAY FAR TOO EASILY. I EXPECTED...

YOW!

ME AND MY BIG MOUTH!

THE COMBINED WEIGHT OF MY WALL AND THOSE ROBOTS SHATTERED THE ICE. BUT--UNDERNEATH! THAT'S NOT WATER!

THAT'S ACID!

HERE COME MORE ROBOTS.

AND NOW HEATERS ARE ACTIVATING ALL ACROSS THE ROOF. I CAN ALREADY FEEL THEIR EFFECT.

IF I DON'T FIND A WAY OUT OF HERE--PRONTO--TWO YEARS' FEES AND A PROMISING ACADEMIC CAREER MAY HAVE JUST GONE DOWN THE PROVERBIAL DRAIN!

POLARIS.

HER FIRST SENSATION IS MOVEMENT: REGULAR, GENTLE, UP-AND-DOWN, ROUND AND ROUND.

IT'S SO PEACEFUL THAT IT TAKES AN EFFORT FOR HER TO WAKE UP.

WHEN SHE FINALLY DOES SO, IT'S WITH THE MERRY TUNE OF A CALLIOPE IN HER EARS, THE SMELL OF FRESH POPCORN IN HER NOSTRILS, THE TASTE OF COTTON CANDY ON HER LIPS.

A... CAROUSEL!

IT'S BEAUTIFUL.

THAT SOUND-- A CHILD'S LAUGHTER!

THERE! RUNNING BY-- I RECOGNIZE HER FROM PHOTOGRAPHS PROFESSOR XAVIER SHOWED US. IT'S COLOSSUS' LITTLE SISTER, *ILLYANA!*

ILLYANA, DON'T RUN AWAY! I'M HERE TO HELP YOU!

HER THOUGHTS FOCUSED ON THE GIRL SHE'S HERE TO RESCUE, POLARIS MOMENTARILY FORGETS THAT JUST BECAUSE SOMETHING IS BEAUTIFUL AND FAMILIAR...

...DOES NOT MEAN IT'S NOT DANGEROUS.

IT'S A LITTLE MISTAKE. IT COSTS HER.

AAIII--!

THE HOOF SLAMS HER TO THE FLOOR OF THE CAROUSEL, KNOCKING HER BREATH FROM HER. AROUND HER, FOLLOWING THE HORSE'S LEAD, ALL THE RIDE'S ANIMALS COME TO LIFE, AND CLOSE EAGERLY IN FOR THE KILL.

BUT ALTHOUGH HURT, POLARIS IS FAR FROM HELPLESS.

A MAGNETIC FORCE BLAST LITERALLY RIPS HER ASSAILANTS TO SHREDS.

I WAS CARELESS. IT'S BEEN TOO LONG SINCE I LAST USED MY MUTANT ABILITIES IN A COMBAT SITUATION, AND THIS IS NO PLACE FOR ON-THE-JOB RETRAINING.

Ah, WELL. THERE'S PRECIOUS LITTLE I CAN DO TO REMEDY THAT NOW. I'LL SIMPLY HAVE TO COPE AS BEST I CAN.

ILLYANA, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT? I'M A FRIEND...

I KNOW WHO YOU ARE, POLARIS.

AND I HAVE A SURPRISE FOR YOU.

EAT HOT LEAD, SUCKER!!

BLAM

BLAM BLAM

BANSHEE.

A FACSIMILE OF A WESTERN TOWN. FASCINATIN'.

DRAW, PAHDNUH!

I'M IN A CROSSFIRE.

CYBORG SHOOTOUT

I HAVE AN EVEN CHANCE WITH THE GUNSLINGER FACIN' ME, BUT I'M A SITTIN' DUCK F'R HIS PALS IN THE SALOON.

IF I POSSESSED ME SUPER-POWERS*, I COULD ACE THE ENTIRE GANG, IN A TRICE. BUT ME WOUNDS HAVEN'T HEALED-- I WONDER IF THEY EVER WILL? F'R ALL INTENTS AN' PURPOSES, SEAN CASSIDY IS A NORMAL MAN.

BUT BEIN' NORMAL DOESN'T EXACTLY MAKE ME A PUSHOVER.

POW

IN ME YOUTH-- BEFORE I WAS ASSIGNED T' INFILTRATE FACTOR 3-- I WAS ONE OF INTER-POL'S BEST AGENTS.**

URRRH! YUH... GOT ME, PAHDNUH! UHRRR...

*BANSHEE WAS CRITICALLY INJURED IN X-MEN #119;
**WAY BACK IN # -- LIBRARIAN LOUISE.

ME AIM BETTER BE SPOT-ON, THOUGH.

THESE YOBBOS CAN'T MISS ME F'REVER.

BWHOOM!

WHAT'S THIS?! ME MICRO-BOMB NOT ONLY TRASHED THOSE MECHANICAL HIT-MEN--

-- IT ALSO BLEW A PATHWAY OPEN INTO ANOTHER O' MURDERWORLD'S DEATH-TRAPS. IT'S A ROLLER-COASTER. AN-- BEIN' TIED T' THE TRACKS --

--MOIRA!

SEAN!!

YOU'RE TOO LATE, HERO-- NYAH-HAH-HAH! ALREADY A TRAIN IS RUSHING TOWARDS YOUR BELOVED MOIRA MacTAGGERT.

YOU'LL NEVER SAVE HER!

HAVOK.

MY ENERGY BLASTS HAD NO EFFECT ON THIS MONSTROSITY. IT'S ABOUT TO SWALLOW MY ROCKET.

SOMEHOW, I'VE THE FEELING I DON'T WANT TO BE ABOARD WHEN THAT HAPPENS.

TIME, AS THE SAYING GOES, TO BAIL OUT.

FORTUNATELY, THE FULL POWER BOLTS I FIRED MOMENTARILY OVERPOWERED THE HOLOFIELD'S ILLUSIONS, ENABLING ME TO SEE ROUGHLY WHAT'S AROUND ME-- AND WHERE TO JUMP TO.

MY ROCKET EXPLODED-- WHAT A SURPRISE.

WITH LUCK, THAT'LL REGISTER ON MISS LOCKE'S COMPUTERS AS A "KILL". THEY'LL BE EXPECTING NO MORE TROUBLE FROM ME. AND THAT'S AN AN ADVANTAGE I INTEND PUTTING TO VERY GOOD USE.

Hmmm-- I'M IN A UTILITY TUNNEL.

I WISH BANSHEE WERE HERE. HE'S THE X-MEN'S RESIDENT ELECTRONICS WHIZ. WITH HIS HELP, I COULD PROBABLY CRIPPLE MURDERWORLD.

BUT I'M ALONE, WHICH MEANS I CROSS MY FINGERS AND IMPROVISE.

JUDGING FROM THE NUMBER AND SIZE OF THE CABLES RUNNING THROUGH IT, THIS JUNCTION BOX MUST BE PRETTY IMPORTANT.

I WONDER WHAT'LL HAPPEN IF I BREAK IT?

IN THE CONTROL ROOM...

SYSTEMS DYSFUNCTION, MISS LOCKE-- SECTOR 12. I'D BEST INVESTIGATE.

BE CAREFUL, MR. CHAMBERS.

WE LOST MOST OF OUR INTERNAL DEFENSIVE CAPABILITY WHEN POLARIS SHORTED THE PRIMARY SYSTEMS. IF YOU SPOT ANYTHING OUT OF THE ORDINARY, IF YOU RUN INTO TROUBLE, NOTIFY ME AT ONCE.

POLARIS.

NICE TRY, KILLER. BUT USING A METAL GUN, FIRING METAL BULLETS...

... IS NOT A TERRIBLY BRIGHT MOVE AGAINST THE *MISTRESS OF MAGNETISM.*

THE ROBOT WAS SO LIFELIKE. I WAS COMPLETELY FOOLED. THAT MEANS I-- WE-- CAN'T TRUST ANYONE WE MEET HERE, FELLOW X-MEN OR HOSTAGES. THEY COULD ALL BE ROBOT DOUBLES.

WHAT THE--?! THE CAROUSEL'S STARTED SPINNING LIKE A TOP!

SECONDS LATER, THAT CAROUSEL--ITS SPEED INCREASING AT A TERRIFYING RATE-- RIPS ITSELF FREE FROM ITS MOORINGS...

... AND TAKES OFF, STRAIGHT UP, LIKE A HELICOPTER.

ABOARD, POLARIS GRIMLY HOLDS ONTO A STANCHION FOR DEAR LIFE.

MOTION OF THIS THING... IS MAKING ME... ILL.

IT'S ALSO GENERATING AWESOME CENTRIFUGAL FORCE. I... CAN'T HOLD ON MUCH LONGER.

BUT IF I LET GO, I'LL SHOOT OUT OF HERE LIKE A BULLET. I'LL SPLATTER AGAINST A WALL LONG BEFORE I CAN USE MY POWERS TO STOP MYSELF.

IT'S LIKE RIDING THE ULTIMATE BUCKING BRONCO--THE CAROUSEL'S SHIFTS IN DIRECTION SO DISORIENTING POLARIS--

...THAT SHE'S UNABLE TO MAGNETICALLY AFFECT ITS WAYWARD FLIGHT. ALL SHE CAN DO IS ENDURE--AND PRAY THE CAROUSEL REACHES ITS BREAKING POINT BEFORE SHE DOES.

THEN, AS ABRUPTLY AS THIS MANIC FLIGHT BEGAN IT ENDS.

BOOM!

≥Whew!≤ AM I GLAD THAT'S OVER.

THIS MAGNETIC ANTI-GRAVITY FORCE FIELD SHOULD PROTECT ME FROM ANY MORE ATTACKS-- AND GIVE ME THE BREATHING SPACE I NEED TO FIGURE OUT MY NEXT MOVE.

REGRETTABLY, AS POLARIS SOON DISCOVERS, MISS LOCKE--AND MURDERWORLD-- HAVE OTHER IDEAS.

NO!

AN INHIBITOR FIELD-- NEUTRALIZING MY POWERS! I'M FALLING!

MISS LOCKE'S HOCKEY TEAM IS REGROUPING FOR ANOTHER ATTACK, AND THE HEATERS ARE TURNING THIS RINK INTO A SAUNA...

HEADS UP, I'VE GOT COMPANY!

LORNA!

IF THE FALL ITSELF DOESN'T KILL HER...

...THE FORCE OF IMPACT WILL SMASH THE ICE BENEATH HER, PLUNGING HER INTO THE ACID-- UNLESS I REACH HER FIRST!

THIS CLOSE TO THE HEATERS THEIR EFFECTS ARE MURDEROUS. CREATING-- AND MAINTAINING-- MY ICE SLIDE IS TAKING ALMOST ALL MY STRENGTH.

GOT HER!

SHE'S ONLY STUNNED, THANK GOODNESS. I USED TO BE IN LOVE WITH THE LADY-- I STILL AM. A PART OF ME ALWAYS WILL BE. BUT I'VE FINALLY ACCEPTED THAT HER HEART BELONGS TO ALEX SUMMERS. HE'S A LUCKY GUY. I HOPE HE KNOWS THAT.

Uh-oh! THE WEIGHT OF MY ICE SLIDE IS BREAKING THROUGH THE RINK. IF WE'RE GETTING OUT OF HERE--ALIVE-- IT'S NOW OR NEVER!

IF I SUPERCOOL THE WALL AHEAD OF US-- AS CLOSE TO ABSOLUTE ZERO AS I CAN-- I SHOULD MAKE THE METAL SO BRITTLE...

...THAT THE SLIGHTEST SHARP IMPACT SHOULD SHATTER IT!

AT THAT MOMENT, IN THE SERVICE TUNNEL...

THIS WAS NO INTERNAL DISRUPTION.

THE JUNCTION BOX WAS BLASTED FROM OUTSIDE!

I CANNOT TELL A LIE, SIR.

Eh--?!

I DID IT...

... WITH A HANDY-DANDY, ALL-PURPOSE COSMIC ENERGY BOLT. JUST LIKE THIS.

AHHRRR!

PART OF ME WANTS TO KILL YOU, MISTER. SLOWLY. BUT I WON'T. I... CAN'T. REVENGE IS FOR CHILDREN. I LIKE TO THINK I'M AN ADULT.

ELSEWHERE...

YE'LL NOT HARM MOIRA, YE SPALLEEN!

I'VE STILL SOME MICRO-BOMBS LEFT. IT'LL BE A SIMPLE MATTER T' DERAIL THE TRAIN LONG BEFORE IT REACHES HERE.

SEAN, YE CANNOT DO THAT!

ABOARD THAT ROLLER-COASTER ARE *CANDY SOUTHERN* AND *AMANDA SEFTON*-- ANGEL AN' NIGHTCRAWLER'S SWEETHEARTS!

"IF YE WRECK THIS TRESTLE, YE'LL KILL THEM!"

AN' IF I DON'T, THAT TRAIN'LL KILL *YOU!*

MOIRA, YE'RE TIED WITH *WIRE*, NOT ROPE! I CAN'T UNTIE YE!

HATING HIMSELF, BANSHEE GRABS FOR A MICRO-BOMB...

... WHEN, WITHOUT WARNING, AN ICE ARCH FORMS OVER HIM AND MOIRA...

...TO DEFLECT THE TRAIN...

...WHILE A MAGNETIC FORCE FIELD GENTLY LIFTS ITS HELPLESS PASSENGERS TO SAFETY.

GLORY!

BE STILL, ME HEART. CLOSE CALLS LIKE THIS'LL BE THE DEATH O' ME YET.

BANSHEE! MOIRA! ARE YOU GUYS OKAY?

NEVER BETTER, ICEMAN!

AN' NEVER HAPPIER T' SEE A FAMILIAR FACE.

ANY SIGN OF HAVOK?

NOT SINCE THE INITIAL AMBUSH.

WHY ARE THE WOMEN SMILING SO STRANGELY?

OH, NO!

BOBBY, SEAN--

LOOK OUT!

MOIRA! DEAR LORD, NO--SHE EXPLODED!!

MOIRA WASN'T A "*SHE*", BANSHEE, BUT AN "*IT*". THEY WERE ALL ROBOT SIMULACRUMS OF THE HOSTAGES. I MET ONE OF PETER'S SISTER, NOT LONG AGO.

JUST NOW, I MAGNA-SCANNED THEM AND FOUND THAT THEY DIDN'T HAVE THE NATURAL MAGNETIC AURAS OF *LIVING BEINGS*. AS IT IS, I BARELY ERECTED THIS FORCE FIELD IN TIME TO PROTECT US.

BOOBY-TRAPS! WOW!

THAT MISS LOCKE IS ONE PEACH OF A CUSTOMER, YOU KNOW? I'D SOONER WALTZ WITH A COBRA!

POLARIS, CAN Y'R MAGNETIC POWERS LEAD US T' MURDERWORLD'S CONTROL ROOM? I'LL LAY ODDS THAT'S WHERE WE'LL FIND THE REAL HOSTAGES.

RIGHT YOU ARE, BANSHEE. BUT LOCATING MURDER-WORLD CONTROL IS ONE THING.

REACHING IT ALIVE IS SOMETHING ELSE AGAIN.

WANT TO BET?

HAVOK!

SURRENDER OR FIGHT, MISS LOCKE. THE CHOICE IS YOURS.

I'LL FIGHT-- OHH!

IF YOU INSIST.

ONCE OUR HEROES DETERMINE THAT MISS LOCKE AND Mr. CHAMBERS ARE THE ONLY PEOPLE IN MURDERWORLD--

--OTHER THAN THEMSELVES AND THE HOSTAGES, OF COURSE-- IT BECOMES A RELATIVELY SIMPLE MATTER DISARM THE GIANT COMPLEX, REVIVE AND RELEASE THEIR FRIENDS AND, FINALLY, MAKE THEIR WEARY WAY BACK TO THE WAITING HOVERCRAFT.

THERE, THEY FIND THAT THINGS HAVE CHANGED SOMEWHAT SINCE THEY WENT UNDERGROUND.

NORTH BEACH LANDFILL PROJECT KEEP OUT

LOOK AT THAT!

DID YOU SEE THAT LIGHTNING BOLT? I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE IT!

AND WHERE'D THIS LOUSY WEATHER COME FROM?!

ONLY TWO PEOPLE I KNOW OF ARE CAPABLE OF WHIPPIN' UP INSTANT HURRICANES: THOR... AN' STORM. BUT I CAN'T IMAGINE ORORO CREATIN' ANYTHING THIS BIG-- I DOUBT SHE COULD CONTROL IT.

WE'D BEST RETURN HOME, ALEX, AS FAST AS WE CAN. I FEAR THIS NIGHT'S BATTLES... MAY BE FAR FROM OVER.

UPSTATE...

THIS TEMPEST BLANKETS THE NORTHEASTERN UNITED STATES--

-- AND IT GROWS IN SIZE AND STRENGTH WITH EVERY PASSING MINUTE. IT SEEMS CENTERED ON THIS CASTLE. SOMETHING HAS BEEN SET IN MOTION HERE THAT I HAD NOT ANTICIPATED.

AT THIS RATE, BY MORNING, THE WIND WILL BE RIPPING ADULT TREES OUT BY THEIR ROOTS AND SCOURING HILLS OF SOIL AND VEGETATION DOWN TO THE BARE ROCK.

A GENUINE HAVANA.

I ADMIRE YORE TASTE IN CIGARS, VIC.

ARCADE, WE FACE ECOLOGICAL DEVASTATION OF UNPARALLELLED MAGNITUDE-- YET, AS USUAL, YOUR CONCERN IS SOLELY FOR YOUR OWN PERSONAL GRATIFICATION. I PITY YOU.

DON'T. THANKS FOR THE LIGHT.

IT'S NICE TA KNOW YORE TIN SUIT'S GOOD FOR *SOMETHING*.

UNNOTICED STORM'S STATUE BEGINS TO GLOW...

... ITS SOFT INNER LIGHT PULSING IN TIME TO THE LIGHTNING BOLTS SPAWNED BY THE STORM SHE HERSELF HAD SUMMONED.

ARCADE, IF YOU WISH TO TELL ME SOMETHING, PLEASE DO SO.

WHY, VIC, I DO BELIEVE I'VE STRUCK A NERVE. SINCE I'M ON A ROLL, I'LL WHACK IT AGAIN.

TAKE A LOOK AT YORE LIQUID CRYSTAL DISPLAY MONITOR, HOTSHOT. YOU SEE WHAT I JUST SAW?!

NIGHTCRAWLER'S DISAPPEARED!!

NEXT ISSUE: *THE X-MEN'S CLIMACTIC SHOWDOWN WITH Dr. DOOM AND*

ARCADE!

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THE UNCANNY X-MEN™

WE DID IT BEFORE... DARE WE DO IT AGAIN?

ROGUE STORM!

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE UNCANNY X-MEN!™

ROGUE STORM!

TWO MILES ABOVE THE GROUND, THE GERMAN-BORN MUTANT X-MAN, NIGHTCRAWLER, APPEARS LITERALLY OUT OF NOWHERE...

...AND SCREAMS!

CHRIS CLAREMONT WRITER | DAVE COCKRUM & JOSEF RUBINSTEIN ARTISTS

GLYNIS, colorist
ORZ, letterer

LOUISE JONES, EDITOR
JIM SHOOTER, Ed.-in-CHIEF

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AROUND HIM RAGES THE ULTIMATE STORM--WEATHER SUCH AS THIS PLANET HAS NOT SEEN SINCE ITS INFANCY--BUT HE IS ONLY DIMLY AWARE OF IT. INDEED, HE IS BARELY ALIVE--AND LUCKY TO BE THAT.

AMONG HIS MUTANT POWERS IS THE ABILITY TO TELEPORT. HIS RANGE IS LIMITED BY HIS STRENGTH, AND THE DISTANCE AND DIRECTION OF EACH 'PORT. NEAR IS EASIER THAN FAR, AND NORTH-SOUTH (ALONG EARTH'S MAGNETIC LINES OF FORCE) EASIER THAN EAST-WEST (AGAINST THEM.)

A VERTICAL 'PORT IS THE MOST DIFFICULT, AND DANGEROUS.

HE'S JUST "JUMPED" TWO MILES--STRAIGHT UP--BUT IT FEELS AS IF HE'S RUN A TRIPLE MARATHON.

Ohhh--I HURT SO MUCH, I HAVE TO BE ALIVE.

ON MY FACE--RAIN! I MADE IT. I'M OUTSIDE DOOM'S CASTLE! I'M--

--FALLING! MEIN GOTT! I MUST HAVE GREYED OUT FROM THE STRAIN OF TELEPORTING. I'M DROPPING FAST--AND PICKING UP SPEED EVERY SECOND!

I CAN'T PORT TO THE GROUND. I'LL MATERIALIZE WITH THE SAME VELOCITY I HAVE NOW...

... AND SPLATTER MYSELF ALL OVER THE LANDSCAPE. WHAT A DELIGHTFUL PROSPECT.

I'M STILL FAIRLY HIGH UP, THOUGH.

PERHAPS I CAN TURN THAT--AND THE VERY VIOLENCE OF THIS GALE--TO MY ADVANTAGE. THUNDERSTORMS CREATE VICIOUS WINDS BLOWING THROUGH ALL DIMENSIONS: RIGHT, LEFT, DOWN -- *UP*.

I'LL SKYDIVE--TRY TO FIND AN *UPDRAFT*--AND USE IT TO BLEED OFF SOME OF MY VELOCITY.

I HAVE TO BE CAREFUL, THOUGH. I COULD JUST AS EASILY GLIDE INTO A DOWNDRAFT.

THERE'S A LAKE, A PERFECT PLACE TO LAND--PROVIDED IT ISN'T FROZEN.

WUNDERBAR! I FOUND ONE!

ACH, IT'S LIKE RIDING A ROLLER-COASTER. AND THE THUNDER! I FEEL AS IF I'M BEING PUMMELED BY HAMMERS!

HE WAITS UNTIL HE REACHES THE APOGEE OF THE UPDRAFT-- WHERE HE STARTS TO FALL AGAIN--

BAMF

--AND THEN, WITH A CRACK OF FLAME AND AN UNHEARD "BAMF" OF IMPLODING AIR...

...NIGHTCRAWLER VANISHES FROM THE HEART OF THE STORM...

...TO MATERIALIZE TEN FEET ABOVE THE LAKE.

SO MUCH FOR MY AMBITION TO BE A CHAMPION OLYMPIC DIVER.

STILL, AS THE SAYING GOES, ANY LANDING ONE CAN SWIM AWAY FROM...!

THE WATER'S ICE-COLD-- I CAN FEEL IT EVEN THROUGH MY INSULATED COSTUME.

THE SURFACE-- AT LAST!

OH, MY. THAT AIR SMELLS SWEET. FOR A FEW SECONDS, I WAS BEGINNING TO THINK MY LUCK HAD RUN OUT.

AND, AS USUAL, I ALSO THINK I SPOKE TOO SOON. I'M A LONG WAY FROM SHORE AND TOO WEAK TO 'PORT. I'LL HAVE TO SWIM FOR IT.

AND, CLOSE TO AN HOUR LATER...

P-P-PIECE OF C-C-C-CAKE!

MUST... KEEP MY TEETH CLENCHED TIGHT. IF THEY START CHATTERING, MY FANGS COULD CUT MY LIPS AND TONGUE TO RIBBONS.

I... DO NOT LIKE WATER-- ESPECIALLY IN MID-WINTER. HOW DID I EVER GET MYSELF INTO THIS MESS IN THE FIRST PLACE?!

HE ANSWERS HIMSELF WITH A BARKED, IRONIC LAUGH AND THEN HIS FACE TURNS GRIM ONCE MORE AS MEMORIES FLASH BACK TO THE PREVIOUS EVENING, WHEN ARCADE'S HENCHWOMAN, **MISS LOCKE**, ANNOUNCED TO STORM THAT SHE HAD KIDNAPPED THE X-MEN'S LOVED ONES. **Dr. DOOM** WAS HOLDING **ARCADE** UNDER A SENTENCE OF DEATH, SHE'D STATED, AND IF THE X-MEN WISHED TO SEE THEIR RELATIVES AND FRIENDS AGAIN, ALIVE, ALL THEY HAD TO DO WAS RESCUE ARCADE.

PROFESSOR XAVIER SENT **HAVOK**, **POLARIS**, **ICEMAN** AND **BANSHEE**...

...TO FREE THE HOSTAGES MISS LOCKE HELD IN ARCADE'S ASSASSINATION AMUSEMENT PARK, **MURDERWORLD**...

...WHILE THE X-MEN **STORM**, **COLOSSUS**, **NIGHTCRAWLER**, **WOLVERINE** AND **ANGEL** CONFRONTED **Dr. DOOM**.

NIGHTCRAWLER AWOKE IN A FEATURELESS CELL. HE HAD NO IDEA WHERE IT WAS LOCATED OR WHAT SURROUNDED IT. HE COULD ONLY ESCAPE BY TELEPORTING "BLIND." BUT HE MATERIALIZED AROUND A SOLID OBJECT, HE RISKED BEING MAIMED, OR WORSE. HE DID IT, ANYWAY.

AT FIRST, EVERYTHING WENT THE X-MEN'S WAY.

THEY SHOULD HAVE KNOWN IT WAS TOO GOOD TO LAST.

DOOM BEAT THEM WITH CONTEMPTOUS EASE.

*SEE THE LAST TWO ISSUES -- *LOUISE*.

I GAMBLED I WAS IMPRISONED IN DOOM'S CASTLE. ANGEL VISITED HERE LAST SUMMER.* ACCORDING TO HIS LAYOUT, THE CATACOMBS EXTENDED NO MORE THAN A KILOMETER BENEATH THE GROUND.

I FIGURED I COULD 'PORT A COUPLE OF MILES, AND THAT WOULD GIVE ME A SUFFICIENT MARGIN OF SAFETY. I THINK IF I WERE A CAT, I'D BE WORKING ON MY *TENTH* LIFE BY NOW.

*MTIO #68--L.

"BUT MY GAMBLE PAID OFF. I'M FREE! AND IF I CAN FREE THE OTHERS, THE X-MEN WILL GIVE *HERR DOKTOR* DOOM A REMATCH HE'LL NEVER FORGET."

MEANWHILE, IN DOOM'S STUDY, NIGHTCRAWLER'S ESCAPE HAS NOT GONE UNNOTICED.

FACE IT, VIC, YOU LOST AN X-MAN! DON'T THAT BOTHER YOU NONE?

LITTLE MAN, HAVE YOU *NO* UNDERSTANDING OF DOOM?

REMEMBER, ARCADE, I DESIGNED THEIR DEATH-TRAPS TO *TEST* THEM--THEIR ABILITIES, THEIR INTELLIGENCE, THEIR COURAGE. IF THE X-MEN ARE TRULY AS FORMIDABLE AS YOU HAVE--INCESSANTLY--BOASTED, THEY WILL ESCAPE. IF NOT...

ORDERS, SIR?

NIGHTCRAWLER IS OUT. I WISH HIM RETAKEN ALIVE AND RELATIVELY UNHARMED.

SHEE-OOT, VIC, YOU SURE KNOW HOW TO SPOIL A BODY'S FUN.

ARCADE, YOU ARE BENEATH CONTEMPT. YOU ARE INTELLECT WITHOUT PURPOSE, POWER WITHOUT RESPONSIBILITY. YOUR ONLY GOAL IS YOUR OWN SELF-GRATIFICATION-- *WHAT?!!*

ORORO, CLOSE THAT WINDOW, AT ONCE!

AS YOU COMMAND, LORD DOOM.

THIS GALE BEGAN SOON AFTER I DEFEATED THE X-MEN, ON A NIGHT WHEN *CLEAR* SKIES WERE FORECAST. IT IS CENTERED ON THIS CASTLE AND IT WORSENS BY THE MINUTE. *ORORO--STORM--* IS A WEATHER-WITCH. COULD THIS BE *HER* DOING?

NO. SHE IS HELPLESS, IN A PRISON FROM WHICH THERE IS NO ESCAPE. AND YET...

...IF NOT HER, THEN *WHO* CREATED THIS UNNATURAL TEMPEST, AND CONTROLS IT NOW?

AT THAT VERY MOMENT, THE DEPOSED LATVERIAN MONARCH'S ANXIOUS QUESTIONS ARE BEING ECHOED TWO THOUSAND MILES WESTWARD, IN THE CHEYENNE MOUNTAIN HEADQUARTERS OF **NORAD**-- THE NORTH AMERICAN AIR DEFENSE COMMAND.

GLORY!

THERE IT IS, GENERAL FREDERICKS. THIS IS A REAL-TIME, LIVE SATELLITE TV TRANSMISSION.

AT THE STORM'S CORE, THE WINDS ARE 150 KNOTS, GUSTING TO 200-PLUS. BAROMETRIC PRESSURE'S ALMOST TOO LOW TO MEASURE.

FORTUNATELY, THE MOST EXTREME EFFECTS ARE CONCENTRATED IN UPSTATE NEW YORK IN AN AREA THAT IS VIRTUALLY UNINHABITED. BUT THE CORE IS EXPANDING.

I GET THE PICTURE, COLONEL. I'M CALLING THE PRESIDENT.

AROUND DOOM'S CASTLE, THE WIND ROARS AND THE THUNDER IS **FELT** MORE THAN HEARD. OCCASIONALLY, AN EXPLOSIVE CRACK MOMENTARILY FILLS THE AIR--

-- THE SOUND OF CENTURIES OLD, 100-FOOT TALL FIR TREES BEING SNAPPED IN TWO AT THE BASE...

AND THE LIGHTNING FLASHES SO CONTINUOUSLY THAT THE CASTLE IS LIT ALMOST AS BRIGHT AS DAY.

I SEEN A LOTTA WEIRD THINGS SINCE I HIRED ON WITH DOOM, BUT THIS BEATS 'EM ALL.

WHAT'S'A MATTER, PHIL-- YOU AIN'T SEEN A HURRICANE BEFORE?

I SEEN MY SHARE OF ***EV'RYTHING***, TOBE. THIS STILL BEATS 'EM ALL.

I DON'T MIND TELLIN' YA, PARTNER-- I'M SPOOKED.

WELL, I GOTTA ADMIT, I'D RATHER BE IN HERE THAN OUTSIDE. IF THAT NIGHTCRAWLER-DUDE MADE IT TO THE FOREST, HE'S GOT MY SYMPATHIES.

LISSEN TO THEM TREES GO, PHIL. AT THIS RATE, BY MORNING, THE SLOPES 'ROUND HERE ARE GONNA BE SCOURED CLEAN DOWN TO THE BARE ROCK.

Huh?! WHAT'S THAT?!?

PHIL--

--THE WINDOW!!

NIGHTCRAWLER HOWLS, HIS VOICE TOPPING THE STORM, AND BARES HIS TEETH IN A DAEMONIC SNARL.

THESE MERCENARIES ARE AMONG THE BEST IN THE WORLD--DOOM REQUIRES NO LESS--SO THE X-MAN'S SUDDEN APPEARANCE AND HORRIFIC VISAGE FREEZES THEM FOR ONLY A SECOND.

BAMF

YET, BY THE TIME THEY RECOVER THEIR WITS AND OPEN FIRE...

... NIGHTCRAWLER'S SOMEWHERE ELSE.

GUTEN NACHT, MEINE HERREN.

I HOPE YOU HAVE MOST *UNPLEASANT* DREAMS.

HUNNNGNH!

THAT WAS REFRESHINGLY EASY. AND MY BRIEF SCRAP HAS GENERATED A WELCOME ADRENALIN SURGE WITHIN ME. FOR A BRIEF TIME, I'LL BE OPERATING AT PEAK EFFICIENCY. LET'S HOPE I'LL FINISH MY WORK BEFORE IT WEARS OFF.

THE STORM IS WORKING TO MY ADVANTAGE, FORCING DOOM'S GOONS TO STAY INSIDE. THE COAST BELOW IS CLEAR.

READY OR NOT, MY FRIENDS, HERE I COME.

AND SPEAKING OF THOSE FRIENDS-- COLOSSUS.

THE WHIRLPOOL IS STEADILY ERODING THE ROCK I CLING TO. THE WATER IS NO PROBLEM. I DO NOT BREATHE IN MY ARMORED FORM, SO I WILL NOT DROWN.

BUT HUGE ENERGY GUNS LINE THE BOTTOM OF THIS CELL. THEY BLAST ANYTHING THAT DROPS TOWARDS THEM. THEIR CONCENTRATED FIRE MAY BE ENOUGH TO INJURE EVEN MY ORGANIC STEEL BODY.

I HAVE BEEN WATCHING VARIOUS ROCKS FALL.

I THINK I HAVE SPOTTED A PATTERN TO THE WAY THE GUNS OPERATE. THIS PIECE I'M KNOCKING OFF IS ROUGHLY MY SIZE AND MASS. IT SHOULD PROVIDE AN ADEQUATE GUINEA PIG.

"AHA! AS I EXPECTED, THE BLASTERS DISINTEGRATED IT. NOW TO DROP A SECOND PIECE--

"--THIS ONE CONSIDERABLY SMALLER, THE SIZE OF *PETER RASPUTIN*.

"THE GUNS *AREN'T* FIRING!

SIZE *HAS* TO BE THE KEY. THEY WILL FIRE ON THE MASSIVE ARMORED FORM OF COLOSSUS, WHILE IGNORING THE COMPARATIVELY SMALLER HUMAN, PETER RASPUTIN.

I REALLY HAVE NO ALTERNATIVE. IF I DO NOT GO NOW, I WILL WHEN THIS PILLAR COLLAPSES-- AND THAT WON'T BE LONG.

I MUST BREATHE DEEPLY-- SATURATE MY LUNGS WITH AIR. IN MY HUMAN SELF, I AM ALSO MUCH WEAKER THAN I AM AS COLOSSUS. SURVIVING THIS WHIRLPOOL WILL NOT BE EASY.

IT'S A ROUGH PASSAGE. CHUNKS FROM THE CRUMBLING ROCK PILLAR SWIRL ALL ABOUT HIM, SOME LARGE ENOUGH TO DRAW THE ATTENTION OF THE ROOM'S BLASTERS.

OWW!

GRIMLY, COLOSSUS PRESSES ON, STRUGGLING TO CONTROL THE SPEED AND DIRECTION OF HIS DESCENT AS THE WHIRLPOOL DRAWS HIM DOWN.

BLASTERS FIRE, SCORCHING HIS SIDE AS THEY VAPORIZE A ROCK ONLY METERS FROM ONE OUTSTRETCHED ARM.

HE CRIES OUT IN SHOCK AND PAIN, AND LOOSES HALF HIS AIR.

THE GUNS-- I'VE NEARLY REACHED THEM! BY THE WHITE WOLF--THEY ALL SEEM TO BE POINTED AT ME!

HE SWIMS FOR HIS LIFE...

... EXPECTING EVERY SECOND TO BE HIS LAST.

I'M... THROUGH! GUNS... ARE NOT... TRACKING ME!

ALMOST... NO AIR LEFT. LUNGS... BURNING. BUT I CANNOT CHANGE YET. I AM STILL TOO CLOSE--MUST PUSH ON... BIT... LONGER.

FINALLY, WHEN IT SEEMS AS THOUGH HIS LUNGS WOULD BURST...

NO MORE TIME. I MUST TAKE THE RISK, OR DROWN.

FOOM

THE YOUNG RUSSIAN CONCENTRATES AND, IN A FLARE OF BIO-ENERGY, FLESH AND BLOOD MIRACULOUSLY TRANSFORM TO NEAR-INVULNERABLE LIVING ARMOR AND...

ANGEL. AT THE COST OF SOME SINGED PIN-FEATHERS, I THINK I'VE DOPED THIS PLACE OUT. SO LONG AS I REMAIN ON MY CENTRAL PERCH, I'M SAFE.

BUT THE MOMENT I FLY OFF, LASERS MOUNTED IN THE WALLS, FLOOR AND CEILING OF THE CELL OPEN FIRE.

THE INDIVIDUAL LIGHT BEAMS AREN'T INTENSE ENOUGH TO KILL, BUT *EN MASSE* THEIR CUMULATIVE EFFECT IS DEADLY.

AT FIRST, I THOUGHT THEY FIRED RANDOMLY, BUT THEY DON'T. THERE'S A PROGRAMMED SEQUENCE, FORMING A COMPLEX, INTRICATE MAZE.

IF I WANT TO LEAVE, ALL I HAVE TO DO IS FLY THAT MAZE -- AT TOP SPEED, WITHOUT HESITATION OR MISTAKES. EITHER WOULD BE FATAL.

HERE GOES!

THIS IS AKIN TO THE ***DANGER ROOM***, WHERE PROFESSOR XAVIER TRAINS THE X-MEN IN THE USE OF OUR MUTANT ABILITIES -- THOUGH THE STAKES HERE ARE A WEE BIT HIGHER.

DOOM MUST BE DOING THE SAME THING -- TESTING US, TO SEE WHAT WE CAN DO AND HOW WELL WE CAN DO IT.

I GOT A HOT FLASH FOR YOU, DOOMSIE -- WE'RE THE ***BEST!***

HOLY --! THE CELL BLEW UP BEHIND ME! NICE TRY, FELLA, BUT NO CIGAR!

I RECOGNIZE THIS HALL. I'M IN THE CATACOMBS BENEATH DOOM'S CASTLE.

I'LL BET THE OTHERS ARE NEARBY. I'VE GOT TO FIND 'EM AND FREE 'EM.

Hmnh? THAT ROARING SOUND -- AND THE SUDDEN INCREASE IN AIR PRESSURE! SOMETHING'S COM--

--IGGLUGGMPGH!

WOLVERINE...

...FLOATS IN A ZERO-GRAVITY FIELD, WITHIN A CELL WHOSE OP-ART PAINT SCHEME CREATES THE ILLUSION THAT THERE ARE NO WALLS, NO FLOOR, NO CEILING--ONLY INFINITE SPACE.

HIS SLIGHTEST MOVES TRIGGER VICIOUS PSYCHEDELIC LIGHTSHOWS THAT ARE METHODICALLY, INEXORABLY DRIVING HIM INSANE.

IT'S A FAMILIAR BATTLE--THIS STRUGGLE TO HOLD ONTO HIS SANITY--ONE HE'S FOUGHT ALL HIS LIFE.

HE DOESN'T REMEMBER WHAT SET HIM OFF THE DAY HE ALMOST KILLED **JAMES** AND **HEATHER HUDSON**--HIS BEST FRIENDS, AND THE ONLY FAMILY HE'D EVER KNOWN.

IT COULD HAVE BEEN A WORD, A GESTURE, A SMELL. HIS SENSES ARE SO ACUTE THAT HE RESPONDS TO SUBLIMINAL CLUES MOST PEOPLE DON'T EVEN NOTICE.

LOGAN--WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS?! WE MEAN YOU NO HARM. YOU'RE SAFE WITH US. WE... LOVE YOU.

YOU'RE A RATIONAL BEING. YOU HAVE AN INTELLECT. USE IT.

DON'T SIMPLY REACT, DON'T BLINDLY FOLLOW YOUR INSTINCTS. AND EMOTIONS. ***THINK***, LOGAN. CONTROL THEM. CONTROL YOURSELF! YOU'RE NOT AN ANIMAL, MY FRIEND. YOU'RE A ***MAN!***

YOU'RE RIGHT, THERE, MAC. AN ANIMAL WOULDN'T DO SOME OF THE THINGS I'VE DONE.

MAC, HEATHER--I'M... SORRY.

YOU GUYS HAVE BEEN GOOD TO ME. SO HOW DO I REPAY YOU? BY TRYIN' TA TEAR YER HEARTS OUT. FACE FACTS, MAC. I'M CRAZY--A GOVERNMENT CERTIFIED, PSYCHO KILLING THING. I OUGHT'A BE LOCKED AWAY.

YOU'RE ILL, LOGAN. NO MORE, NO LESS. ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS FIND A CURE.

MAC TRIED, I'LL GIVE HIM THAT. THE BERSERKER SPELLS CAME LESS AN' LESS FREQUENTLY. AN' FER A WHILE, AFTER I JOINED THE X-MEN, I GOT 'EM PRETTY MUCH COMPLETELY UNDER CONTROL.

BUT, LATELY, THAT CONTROL'S BEEN SLIPPIN'.

I'M BECOMIN' AS MUCH A DANGER TO THE X-MEN AS TO THE CREEPS WE FIGHT.

I CAN FEEL A BERSERKER RAGE BUILDIN' INSIDE ME. IF I CUT LOOSE, I'LL REVERT TO THE ANIMAL SIDE O' MY NATURE--SO TOTALLY THAT I MAY NEVER REGAIN MY HUMANITY.

I'VE BEEN THAT ROUTE BEFORE. I'D RATHER DIE.

'COURSE, I COULD DO NOTHING. THEN, I'D BE SAFE.

I AIN'T PLAYED THINGS SAFE A DAY IN MY LIFE, AND I AIN'T ABOUT TA START, EITHER.

I HAVETA HARNESS THE POWER OF MY RAGE--MAKE IT WORK FOR ME.

I HIT A WALL! AN', AS EXPECTED, IT'S REPELLIN' ME. I SET OFF ANOTHER LIGHTSHOW, TOO--CRIPES, IT'S MURDER!

I CAN HANDLE IT, THOUGH. I GOT TO.

AT WOLVERINE'S MENTAL COMMAND...

...CLAWS EXTEND FROM THE BACKS OF BOTH HANDS.

SNIKT!

RAZOR-SHARP, FORGED OF UNBREAKABLE ADAMANTIUM, THEY'RE CAPABLE OF CUTTING ANY SUBSTANCE ON EARTH.

AS WOLVERINE COLLIDES WITH ANOTHER WALL, HE SLASHES IT OPEN IN THE SPLIT-SECOND BEFORE IT BOUNCES HIM AWAY.

AGAIN AND AGAIN, HE REPEATS THE PROCESS--

--SOME CUTS SHALLOW, OTHERS DEEP, SOME DOING NO REAL DAMAGE--

--OTHERS, CONSIDERABLE.

WHUNFFF!

THUMP!

I'M ON THE FLOOR! I MUST'A SHORT-CIRCUITED THE ANTI-GRAVITY FIELD.

I... FEEL WASTED-- BUT I CAN STILL THINK! I'M STILL IN CONTROL!

SCORE ONE FER THE "PSYCHO"!

IT TAKES WOLVERINE BARELY A MINUTE TO FIND A WALL AND CUT HIS WAY TO FREEDOM.

Hmnh?! THE CORRIDOR'S FLOODED! I'M PICKIN' UP FAMILIAR SCENTS-- I GUESS I AIN'T THE ONLY X-MAN BUSTIN' OUTTA DOOM'S DUNGEON. THE SCENTS ARE FRESH, BUT ALMOST TOO DIFFUSE TO FOLLOW.

I SHOULD FIND 'EM, SET UP A BATTLE PLAN-- HOLD IT!

THE AIR'S STINKIN' WITH OZONE. AN' THUNDER'S SHAKIN' THE WALLS, EVEN DOWN HERE. THE CASTLE MUST BE IN THE MIDDLE OF ONE BEAUT OF AN ELECTRICAL STORM.

THIS DOESN'T FEEL NATURAL. IF 'RORO CREATED SOMETHIN' THIS BIG AN' POWERFUL, SHE MUST BE FIGHTIN' FOR HER LIFE.

I GOT NO TIME TO CORRAL THE OTHERS. 'RORO NEEDS MY HELP-- NOW!

SOON, IN Dr. DOOM'S PRIVATE STUDY...

WHO DARES-- WOLVERINE!

ON YER TOES, CREEPS--THE CAVALRY JUST ARRIVED!

FOLLOWIN' DOOM'S AN' ARCADE'S TRAILS WAS CHILD'SPLAY. BUT I COULDN'T FIND A TRACE O' STORM'S SCENT.

THERE SHE IS-- BUT HOW COME SHE AIN'T FIGHTIN' DOOM?!

ORORO, DEAL WITH THIS DIMINUTIVE UPSTART.

AS YOU COMMAND, LORD DOOM.

NOT A CHANCE, SWEETHEART!

FASCINATING. AND I THOUGHT *I* WAS RUTHLESS.

"A" FER EFFORT, DOOM. YER ROBOT LOOKED PERFECT, BUT I NEVER GO JUST BY APPEARANCES.

I KNOW A PERSON BY THEIR STANCE, SMELL, FEEL.

I KNEW THE MINUTE I LAID EYES ON "STORM" THAT SHE WAS A FAKE-- AHRRR!

SHE WAS ONLY A TOY, LITTLE MAN. DID YOU THINK YOU WOULD DEAL WITH ME AS EASILY?

EASY OR HARD, IT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE. I'LL KEEP COMING, DOOM--

--UNTIL I GET YOU.

MATERIALIZIN' ABOVE DOOM-- IT'S *NIGHT-CRAWLER!* DOOM HASN'T SPOTTED HIM YET--

--BUT HIS BRIMSTONE STENCH IS SURE TO GIVE HIM AWAY.

WITH A FEARSOME, DAEMONIC HOWL--

--NIGHTCRAWLER RIPS A HUGE TAPESTRY OFF THE WALL, AND DIVES FOR THE FLOOR --

BEAUTIFUL, 'CRAWLER! YOU GOT HIM!

CRETIN! DOOM MAY BE BLIND--

-- BUT HE IS FAR FROM HELPLESS!

NOT BAD, BUB. YOU THROW A FAIR PUNCH.

TOO BAD YOU'RE HITTIN' A MAN WITH ADAMANTIUM BONES.

NOW IT'S *MY* TURN.

NO!!

I OFFER A DEAL, DOOM...YOUR LIFE FOR STORM'S-- UNLESS YOU THINK YOU CAN KILL ME BEFORE I POKE THESE CLAWS THROUGH YER FACE PLATE.

THEN AGAIN, I'M ONE OF THE GOOD GUYS. I COULD BE BLUFFING...

YOU DO NOT BLUFF, WOLVERINE. IN THAT, WE ARE MUCH ALIKE.

DECIDE, THEN.

SHE IS ON THE DAIS BEHIND YOU. MY METABOLIC TRANSMUTER TRANSFORMED HER FROM FLESH AND BLOOD INTO LIVING CHROME. THIS ORB WILL REVERSE THE PROCESS.

OF ALL THE CRUEL, SADISTIC--!

THROW THE BALL, PAL. IF DOOM'S LYIN'--

--HE DIES.

DOOM ISN'T LYING.

THAT BLINDING FLASH OF LIGHT!

MEIN LEIBER FREUND, I HOPE WE DID THE RIGHT THING.

FREE!!

LORDS OF THE EARTH AND AIR--

--I--AM-- FREE!

TO THE TRIBES OF WESTERN KENYA, ORORO WAS A GODDESS, MISTRESS OF THE ELEMENTS, BRINGER OF LIFE. THEY WORSHIPPED HER; NEVER REALIZING THAT, ESSENTIALLY, SHE WAS AS HUMAN AS THEY...

...NOT A GODDESS, BUT A MUTANT-- HOMO SUPERIOR.

AS A YOUNG CHILD, SHE WAS BURIED ALIVE, AND THAT TRAUMA LEFT HER AN INCURABLE CLASTROPHOBE. FOR ORORO, HER TRANSFORMATION INTO A LIVING STATUE WAS THE ULTIMATE NIGHTMARE. IN A DESPERATE, INSTINCTIVE BID FOR FREEDOM, HER SUBCONSCIOUS CREATED WITHIN HER AN INSATIABLE DEMAND FOR POWER. THAT NEAR-INFINITE POWER--NOW UNLEASHED-- HAS EVOLVED HER BEYOND ALL COMPREHENSION.

THE TWO X-MEN ARE STUNNED BY HER TRANSFIGURATION.

DOOM IS NOT.

THAT WAS WHY HE'D ALLOWED THEM TO FREE STORM; TO PROVIDE THE MOMENTARY DIVERSION HE NEEDED TO MAKE HIS OWN ESCAPE.

IN RETROSPECT, HOWEVER, HE WONDERS IF HE SHOULD HAVE LEFT WELL ENOUGH ALONE.

DO NOT RUN, DOOM. IT IS A WASTED EFFORT.

NO PLACE ON EARTH CAN HIDE YOU FROM MY WRATH. NO POWER OR ENTITY CAN PROTECT YOU.

I... DEFLECTED THAT LIGHTNING BOLT-- BUT THE EFFORT DRAINED MY ARMOR'S ENERGY RESERVES. ANOTHER SUCH ATTACK MAY WELL DESTROY ME.

HER BREATH IS FIRE AND ICE, HER VOICE ROLLING THUNDER. SHE IS ONE WITH THE ENTIRE PLANET...

IT'S A PROGRESSION THE X-MEN HAVE SEEN BEFORE.

NO.

NOT 'RORO-- NOT HER, TOO. KURT, WE'VE GOT TO STOP HER.

HOW?

AM I NOT BEAUTIFUL, LORD DOOM? AND TERRIBLE? DO YOU NOT FEAR ME? YOU SHOULD.

YOU SHALL.

... AND ALL ITS MYRIAD, ELEMENTAL FORCES ARE HERS TO COMMAND, AS HER MIND IS OVERWHELMED BY MORE -- AND MORE INTENSE -- SENSATIONS THAN SHE HAS EVER CONCEIVED OF, MUCH LESS EXPERIENCED.

MY FLOOD WASHED ME TO THE LOWEST LEVELS OF THE CASTLE'S CATACOMBS. IT TOOK SEEMINGLY FOREVER TO CLIMB OUT.

BY THE WHITE WOLF!

WHAT IS HAPPENING HERE?!

ORORO HAS... CHANGED. SHE IS ATTACKING BOTH DOOM AND OUR FELLOW X-MEN.

I HAD BEST REMOVE EVERYONE FROM HARM'S WAY.

HIS METHOD IS SIMPLE, BUT EFFECTIVE.

HE SMASHES THE GRANITE FLOOR OF THE STUDY, TRUSTING THAT NIGHTCRAWLER'S PHENOMINAL AGILITY, WOLVERINE'S ADAMANTIUM-LACED SKELETON AND DOOM'S ARMOR...

...WILL PREVENT THEIR BEING SERIOUSLY INJURED.

ORORO? IT IS... **PETER**. I STAND BEFORE YOU AS A **FRIEND**.

I HAVE NO FRIENDS. I NEED NONE.

YOU ARE SO... DIFFERENT.

I AM THAT I AM, LITTLE BROTHER.

I AM **POWER**!!

AAIIII!!

MY METAL FORM NATURALLY ATTRACTS HER LIGHTNING BOLTS. EVEN THE TINIEST STRIKE CAUSES ME PAIN. HOWEVER, I CAN WITHSTAND THEIR ONSLAUGHT... FOR THE MOMENT.

I MUST ENDURE--TRY TO REACH ORORO-- BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE.

I HAVE NO WISH TO HARM YOU, PIOTR NIKOLIEVITCH.

BEGONE!

NO!!

WHEW!

NOTHING LIKE BEING IN TIME FOR THE MAIN EVENT.

TROOPS, THERE'S A GALE BLOWING OUTSIDE LIKE YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE. I CAN'T SURVIVE THOSE WINDS. NOTHING LIVING CAN. THEY'RE TEARING THE CASTLE APART-- AND THE LAND AROUND IT.

WE FACE A ROGUE STORM HERE AS WELL, *TOVARISCH.*

IF I COULD BUT REACH MY LABORATORY...

HAVEN'T YOU ALREADY DONE ENOUGH, DOOM?! I'LL LAY ANY ODDS YOU'RE RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS!

ASSESS BLAME WHEN THE CRISIS IS PAST, ANGEL--ASSUMING WE LIVE SO LONG.

MY INTELLECT, MY POWERS, MY DEVICES, ARE THE ONLY THINGS THAT CAN SAVE US.

*YOUR INTELLECT, YOUR POWERS, YOUR DEVICES ARE **FINITE**, DOOM. THEY HAVE LIMITS. I HAVE NONE.*

FOR ALL YOUR POSTURING, YOU ARE STILL NO MORE THAN A MAN.

I AM A **GODDESS!**

NO! YOU ARE **ORORO!**

REMEMBER *THAT*, WIND-RIDER! FIND YOUR ***SELF*** ONCE MORE--FIND YOUR SOUL, YOUR HUMANITY! HOLD ONTO THAT, WITH ALL YOUR HEART AND ALL YOUR STRENGTH, OR WE ARE LOST.

YOU FACE THE GORGON WITHIN YOU, ORORO, AS ***PHOENIX*** DID. YOU MUST TRIUMPH, AS SHE DID NOT!

PHOENIX. THE NAME SPARKS IMAGES, OF A LAUGHING RED-HAIRED WOMAN WHO WAS ORORO'S DEAREST FRIEND.

AND THESE SCATTERSHOT MEMORIES SPARK AN AWARENESS--OF WHO ORORO IS AND WHAT SHE HAS BECOME.

SHE SCREAMS...

... IN RAGE AND GRIEF-- FOR HER DEAD FRIEND, FOR HERSELF--

-- AND THEN RIDES A SPEAR OF RAW ENERGY THROUGH THE HEART OF THE STORM TO THE EDGE OF SPACE.

IF I WERE THE AVENGER, THOR, I COULD DISPERSE THIS STORM WITH A THOUGHT.

BUT I MUST WORK WITH THE FORCES OF NATURE, NOT RIDE ROUGHSHOD OVER THEM, AND GENTLY SHAPE THEM TO MY WILL.

THE EFFORT... IS AS TREMENDOUS AS THE HOLOCAUST ITSELF. I DID NOT DREAM I WAS CAPABLE OF CREATING SUCH A THING.

HER POWER SINGS WITHIN HER...

...AND, AT LAST, ORORO UNDERSTANDS HOW JEAN GREY FELT AS PHOENIX. THOSE MEMORIES OF HER BELOVED FRIEND GIVE HER THE STRENGTH SHE NEEDS TO FACE HER INNER DEMONS. "THE POWER IS HERS," THEY CRY, "WHY GIVE IT UP?!" SHE FIGHTS, SHE ENDURES AND FINALLY...

...SHE TRIUMPHS-- OVER THE STORM AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, OVER THE DARK SIDE OF HER SOUL.

THE EFFORT NEARLY KILLS HER.

SHE'S FALLING!

THE STORM'S SLACKENING, BUT THE WINDS ARE STILL AWFULLY FIERCE.

IT'LL BE DANGEROUS...

...BUT I HAVE TO TRY TO REACH HER!

SHE'S FALLING AT TERMINAL VELOCITY. A SUDDEN STOP WILL BREAK EVERY BONE IN HER BODY. I HAVE TO MATCH SPEEDS, THEN GRADUALLY BREAK HER DESCENT.

AN-- ANGEL...?

WHO BETTER TO RESCUE A DAMSEL IN DISTRESS? RELAX, ORORO, YOU'RE IN GOOD HANDS. YOU'RE SAFE.

SOON...
SUNRISE. IT IS SO... BEAUTIFUL. A GOOD OMEN, I THINK.
THANK YOU, ANGEL.
ANYTIME, STORM. AFTER ALL, WHAT ARE HEROES FOR?
GOING SOMEWHERE, COMRADE ARCADE?
HEY, BE A PAL, COLOSSUS. LEMME GO.
I THINK NOT.
AND UNLESS YOU BEHAVE YOURSELF, I WILL LEAVE YOU TO *WOLVERINE'S* TENDER MERCIES.
SOUNDS GOOD TO ME, BUB.
I AM... PLEASED THAT YOU ARE ALIVE AND WELL, ORORO.
I'LL BET.
LORD DOOM, I ASK A FINAL TIME FOR ARCADE. INNOCENT LIVES ARE AT STAKE. WE MUST HAVE HIM... AND YOUR PLEDGE TO TAKE NO FURTHER HOSTILE ACTION TOWARDS HIM.
YOU ASK MUCH, CHILD.
HE INSULTED ME. HONOR DEMANDS SATISFACTION. AN... APOLOGY WILL SUFFICE.
YOU HEARD HIM, ARCADE. APOLOGIZE.
NO WAY, BIMBO!
WOLVERINE...
I'M SORRY!!
I'LL NEVER INSULT-- OR BOTHER-- YOU AGAIN, VIC. YOU GOT MY WORD.
FOR WHAT IT IS WORTH!
ORORO, I, TOO, WOULD LIKE TO APOLOGIZE.
I AM A CREATURE OF HABIT. YOU X-MEN ATTACKED MY HOME, SEEMINGLY WITHOUT PROVOCATION. I RESPONDED IN KIND.
I WOULD HOPE THAT WE MIGHT BEGIN ANEW. YOU ARE A FASCINATING WOMAN. I SHOULD LIKE TO KNOW YOU BETTER.
VERY... WELL, LORD DOOM. WE PART NEITHER AS FRIENDS NOR ENEMIES. OUR SLATE IS CLEAN. THE NEXT MOVE-- FOR GOOD OR ILL-- IS YOURS.

AT THAT MOMENT, 1500 MILES SOUTH, THE MORNING SUN RISES OVER A REMOTE ISLAND LOCATED DEEP WITHIN THE BERMUDA TRIANGLE, TWO YOUNG PEOPLE SLOWLY, LANGOROUSLY WAKEN.

ONE IS **ALEYTYS FORRESTER**, CAPTAIN/OWNER OF THE TRAWLER, ARCADIA, WASHED OVERBOARD DAYS AGO IN A FREAK SQUALL.

HER COMPANION IS **SCOTT SUMMERS**, CREWMAN AND FRIEND. HE DOVE IN AFTER HER. UNKNOWN TO LEE, SCOTT-- AS **CYCLOPS**--WAS ONCE LEADER OF THE UNCANNY X-MEN.

'MORNING, SLEEPY-HEAD.

AFTER THE DEATH OF HIS BELOVED JEAN GREY--PHOENIX, SCOTT TOOK A LEAVE OF ABSENCE. LAST CHRISTMAS, FOLLOWING WEEKS ON THE ROAD, HE SIGNED ABOARD THE ARCADIA. IT'S A DECISION HE HASN'T REGRETTED.

Mmmnn-- MORNING YOURSELF, JEAN.

JEAN? WHO'S JEAN?

HMNH?! LEE!

I'M SORRY. I... I THOUGHT YOU WERE SOMEONE ELSE.

OBVIOUSLY. WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT?

NOT PARTICULARLY. THIS IS SOMETHING I HAVE TO WORK OUT ON MY OWN.

SCOTT, DON'T...

GOOD LORD!

LEE?! YOUR VOICE TRAILED OFF! WHAT'S WRONG?!

I CAN'T SEE! WHAT IS IT?!

"IT" IS A CITY, SCOTT, UNLIKE ANYTHING I'VE EVER SEEN, ON AN ISLAND ROUGHLY A MILE OFFSHORE...

...AN ISLAND THAT WASN'T THERE YESTERDAY.

ONCE MORE, SCOTT CURSES THE BLINDFOLD WHICH KEEPS HIS EYES SEALED SHUT, AND HIS DEADLY OPTIC BLASTS IN CHECK. HE LOST HIS RUBY QUARTZ GLASSES-- DESIGNED TO CONTROL THE AWESOME POWER OF THOSE MUTANT BEAMS--IN THE SURF. AS A CONSEQUENCE, FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HIS LIFE, HE IS **HELPLESS**.

NEXT

CRY, MUTANT!

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THE UNCANNY X-MEN™

DAZZLER™ AND SPIDER-WOMAN®

TO THE RESCUE WHEN KITTY FALLS TO THE

SHADOW OF DEATH!

CockRuin

Stan Lee PRESENTS: # THE UNCANNY X-MEN!™

CHRIS CLAREMONT WRITER * DAVE COCKRUM & JOSEF RUBINSTEIN ARTISTS * JANICE CHIANG LETTERER * GLYNIS WEIN COLORIST * LOUISE JONES EDITOR * JIM SHOOTER EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

CRY, MUTANT!

DAYS AGO, **SCOTT SUMMERS**, (WHO, **AS CYCLOPS**, IS THE FORMER LEADER OF A TEAM OF MUTANT SUPER-HEROES, THE UNCANNY **X-MEN**), AND **ALEYTYS FORRESTER** (CAPTAIN/OWNER OF THE FISHING TRAWLER **ARCADIA**) WERE WASHED OVERBOARD DURING A FREAK STORM. BOTH WERE SWEPT ASHORE ON A REMOTE, UNINHABITED ISLAND DEEP WITHIN THE INFAMOUS **BERMUDA TRIANGLE**. SINCE THEN, THEY'VE BEEN STRUGGLING TO SURVIVE.

NOW, HOWEVER, THEIR SITUATION HAS CHANGED DRAMATICALLY--BUT WHETHER FOR BETTER OR WORSE, NONE CAN SAY.

I DON'T BELIEVE THIS. I DON'T **WANT** TO BELIEVE IT. YESTERDAY, THIS ISLAND WASN'T HERE. IT DIDN'T EXIST!

AND THIS **CITY!**

ANYTHING IS AN IMPROVEMENT ON THAT SANDPIT WE CAME FROM. AT LEAST HERE WE MIGHT FIND SOME FOOD AND WATER.

YOU MENTIONED A CITY, LEE. WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

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TO BE HONEST, SCOTT, I'M NOT QUITE SURE I CAN DESCRIBE IT.

WHATEVER IT IS, WHEREVER IT CAME FROM, IT'S ***OLD***. IT'S BEEN UNDERWATER FOR A LONG TIME.

WATCH YOUR STEP. THESE MARBLE STAIRS ARE COATED WITH SEA-WEED. THEY'RE SLIPPERY.

ARE WE IN SHADOW? SUDDENLY IT FEELS COLD.

IT'S PARTLY THAT. BUT THIS CITY...

...HAS SUCH AN ***ALIEN*** FEEL TO IT. IT GIVES ME THE WILLIES.

WE'VE REACHED LEVEL GROUND, SOME KIND OF BOULEVARD. THE STATUARY ALL RELATES TO THE SEA. THIS COULD BE A CEREMONIAL GATEWAY.

ARE YOU OKAY, SCOTT? YOU'VE TENSED UP.

SORRY. I'M HAVING A HARD TIME DEALING WITH BEING LED AROUND LIKE THIS, BLINDFOLDED AS I AM, I FEEL SO BLASTED ***HELPLESS***.

TO EACH CLOUD ITS SILVER LINING. AT LEAST YOU'RE SPARED THE SIGHT OF THE SHOCKING STATE OF OUR WARDROBE.

WHAT WARDROBE?

MY POINT EXACTLY.

LEE LEADING THE WAY, THEY BEGIN EXPLORING THE VAST ANCIENT CITY-- BUT BY NIGHTFALL, THEY'VE ONLY MANAGED TO SCRATCH THE SURFACE.

IT'S BEEN TWO DAYS SINCE LEE LEARNED OF MY **OPTIC BLASTS**,* YET SHE HASN'T QUESTIONED ME ABOUT THEM. WHY? DOES SHE EXPECT ME TO MAKE THE FIRST MOVE?

I HOW CAN I TELL HER ABOUT CYCLOPS WITHOUT INVOLVING THE OTHER X-MEN? I'D TRUST HER WITH MY SECRET. I'D... TRUST HER WITH MY **LIFE**. BUT WHAT RIGHT DO I HAVE TO COMPROMISE MY FRIENDS? I DON'T WANT TO LIE TO HER. I... I'M NOT SURE I CAN.

NO FOOD. NO WATER. NO CLOTHES. NO PEOPLE.

BUT WE'VE SHELTER IN ABUNDANCE.

* SEE X-MEN #146 -- LOUISE.

CARE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF IT?

:HMNH?!?:

HER LIPS ARE AS SOFT, AS GENTLE, AS HER TOUCH. THE KISS IS TENDER.

FOR A MOMENT, SCOTT RESPONDS. AND THEN...

LEE, DON'T PLEASE.

WHAT'S WRONG? IS IT... **JEAN?**

HER NAME WAS **JEAN GREY**. WE WERE IN LOVE. SHE... DIED.

I LIKE YOU, LEE. I CARE FOR YOU. TOO MUCH. BUT IT'S TOO SOON. I DON'T WANT TO GET INVOLVED AGAIN.

I'M NOT ASKING FOR INVOLVEMENT! I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL, SCOTT. I KNOW ABOUT GRIEF, AND LOSS. WE BURIED MY **FATHER** TWO MONTHS AGO, REMEMBER?!*

* X-MEN #144 -- L.

BUT I'M COLD AND HUNGRY AND **SCARED**! I NEED A LITTLE HUMAN WARMTH AND COMPASSION AND COMPANIONSHIP! AND IF THAT'S MORE THAN YOU CAN GIVE--

--THEN TO BLAZES WITH YOU!

LEE?

BRILLIANT. I'M ALONE AND DESERVEDLY SO. WHEN I PUT MY MIND TO IT, I CAN BE A REAL CREEP.

I NEVER HAD THIS PROBLEM WITH JEAN. BUT THEN, SHE WAS A TELEPATH. SHE COULD READ MY THOUGHTS, SENSE WHAT I REALLY MEANT.

I'M NOT USED TO DEALING WITH PEOPLE -- OUTSIDE THE UNIQUE HIGH-PRESSURE ENVIRONMENT OF THE X-MEN.

THAT'S PARTLY WHY I TOOK THIS SABBATICAL. TO LEARN.

;OW!;

MY FOOT--I'M *FALLING!*

I HIT HARD, BUT NOTHING SEEMS BROKEN. IT'S THIS *BLINDFOLD--!*

I DON'T KNOW WHERE I AM, WHERE I'M GOING, WHO OR WHAT IS AROUND ME! AND THE IRONY IS THAT I CAN SEE *PERFECTLY!*

ALL I HAVE TO DO IS *OPEN MY EYES!*

WITH THAT, RAW ENERGY RIPS UPWARD THROUGH THE EVENING SKY--

... A BEAM OF FORCE--

--IRRESISTABLE, UNCONTROLLABLE.

THOSE MUTANT OPTIC BLASTS HAVE BEEN SCOTT SUMMERS' BLESSING, AND CURSE, FOR MOST OF HIS ADULT LIFE.

WHAT AM I DOING?! I COULD HAVE SMASHED ANYTHING, KILLED ANYONE IN MY LINE OF SIGHT!

WITHOUT MY SPECIAL *RUBY QUARTZ GLASSES,* THE ONLY WAY I CAN CONTAIN THESE BEAMS IS BY KEEPING MY EYES SHUT.

THE CONDITION IS INCURABLE. I CAN *NEVER* RELAX MY GUARD, OR MAKE A CARELESS MOVE. I CAN NEVER LEAD A "NORMAL" LIFE. BUT WILL WALLOWING IN SELF-PITY CHANGE THAT, MAKE THINGS BETTER?

NO.

THAT SOUND-- A FOOTSTEP!

LEE?

HI.

I'M SORRY SCOTT. I SHOULDN'T HAVE RUN OUT ON YOU. I GUESS WE BOTH NEEDED TO BLOW OFF A LITTLE STEAM.

I'M SORRY, TOO. I DIDN'T MEAN TO SLAP YOU DOWN. I... I'M AFRAID, LEE -- OF TAKING ANOTHER RISK OF BEING HURT.

LIFE IS A RISK ALL THE WAY DOWN THE LINE.

I'M GLAD YOU CAME BACK. I NEED YOU.

WE NEED EACH OTHER.

NIGHT PASSES, AND TWO LONELY YOUNG PEOPLE FIND PEACE IN EACH OTHER'S ARMS, DRAWING WHAT STRENGTH THEY CAN FROM THEIR STILL-FRAGILE EMOTIONAL BOND, WHILE TRYING NOT TO THINK OF WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THAT BOND IN THE FUTURE. BOTH ARE AWARE THAT THE QUESTION MAY BECOME ACADEMIC IF THEY DON'T SOON FIND FOOD AND WATER.

MEANWHILE, FAR TO THE NORTH ON THE GROUNDS OF ***PROFESSOR CHARLES XAVIER'S SCHOOL FOR GIFTED YOUNGSTERS*** *-- SECRET HEADQUARTERS OF THE X-MEN -- IN THE NEW YORK CITY SUBURB OF SALEM CENTER...*

... WOLVERINE HUNTS.

HIS QUARRY IS FELLOW X-MAN, ***NIGHTCRAWLER,*** *WHOSE INDIGO SKIN RENDERS HIM VIRTUALLY IN-VISIBLE IN THE PRE-DAWN SHADOWS.*

WOLVERINE'S FOLLOWING MY TRAIL!

I WENT DEEP INTO THE WOODS BEFORE DOUBLING BACK BY ***TELEPORTING*** INTO THIS TREE. WITH THE BREEZE BLOWING FROM BEHIND HIM, WOLVERINE SHOULDN'T BE ABLE TO PICK UP MY SCENT.

OOPS. I MAY HAVE SPOKEN TOO SOON. HE'S STOPPED!

WOLVERINE STANDS MOTIONLESS FOR A MOMENT... THEN...

UNGLAUBLICH! HE DISAPPEARED! BUT -- WHERE DID HE GO?

NIGHTCRAWLER WAITS AND WATCHES FOR ANY SIGN OF HIS FRIEND BUT WHEN, AFTER A LONG WHILE, NOTHING STIRS...

...HE TELEPORTS DOWN TO THE GROUND.

BAMF

HIS DEPARTURE IS MARKED BY THE SOFT SOUND OF IMPLODING AIR.

HIS ARRIVAL--A SPLIT-SECOND LATER --IS SILENT, THOUGH HE MATERIALIZES IN A BURST OF SULPHEROUS FIRE. HE HAS NO IDEA WHAT CAUSES BOTH THE PYROTECHNIC DISPLAY AND THE ACCOMPANYING BRIMSTONE STENCH...

...BUT HE WISHES THERE WAS SOME WAY TO GET RID OF THEM.

AND NEVER MORE SO THAN NOW.

SURPRISE, SUCKER!

WOLVER-- UNNFFF!

AS NIGHTCRAWLER FALLS, STUNNED AND BREATHLESS --MOMENTARILY TOO GROGGY TO TELEPORT TO SAFETY--UNBREAKABLE, RAZOR-SHARP ADAMANTIUM CLAWS...

T-ZS

...EXTEND FROM THE BACK OF WOLVERINE'S HAND.

GAME'S OVER ELF!

AN' YOU LOSE!

WOLVERINE --DON'T!

SHUCKS. I MISSED.

SCARED YOU, DIDN'T I? SERVES YOU RIGHT, KURT, AFTER MAKING A DUMB-BUTT MOVE LIKE THAT.

I SHOULD HAVE STAYED IN THE TREES.

NO FOOLIN'.

YOUR DISAPPEARANCE RATTLED ME.

HOW DID YOU DO THAT, LOGAN? I NEVER TOOK MY EYES OFF YOU.

IT'S AN OLD *NINJA* TRICK-- STANDIN' IN PLAIN SIGHT WITHOUT BEIN' SEEN-- I LEARNED IN JAPAN. Y'KNOW, ELF, I REALLY ENJOY THESE IMPROVISED TRAINING SESSIONS...

...A HECKUVA LOT MORE THAN OUR WORKOUTS IN THE DANGER ROOM. ESPECIALLY SINCE THE LOSER BUYS THE BEER.

HOW MANY CASES DO YOU OWE ME NOW, ANYWAY?

AT THAT MOMENT, INSIDE THE MANSION'S DINING ROOM...

THUNDERCLOUDS--BUT THE SKY WAS CLEAR A MOMENT AGO.

MY SUBCONSCIOUS IS MANIFESTING MY *ANGER* THROUGH MY ABILITY TO CONTROL THE WEATHER. I HAVEN'T BEEN SO CARELESS WITH MY MUTANT POWERS SINCE I WAS A CHILD.

THIS ARGUMENT WITH ANGEL HAS UPSET ME MORE THAN I REALIZED

PROFESSOR, WOLVERINE IS *DANGEROUS!*

WITH HER MIND, ORORO -- THE X-MEN'S LEADER -- REACHES INTO THE HEART OF THE NASCENT STORM AND, AS CASUALLY AS SHE SUMMONED IT, SENDS IT AWAY.

THEREFORE, ANGEL, WE SHOULD ABANDON HIM?

STORM, HE'S A BORN *KILLER*. WHEN HE FACED DR. DOOM'S ROBOT VERSION OF YOU* HE DESTROYED IT WITHOUT AN INSTANT'S HESITATION. ALL RIGHT, MAYBE HIS ENHANCED SENSES TOLD HIM IT WAS A ROBOT.

BUT WOULD IT HAVE MADE ANY DIFFERENCE IF HE'D FACED A *WOMAN* DISGUISED AS YOU?

*LAST ISSUE--LOUISE.

I THINK NOT, AND IT SCARES ME. PROFESSOR, YOU'RE THE WORLD'S GREATEST AUTHORITY ON MUTANTS. YOU FOUNDED THE X-MEN. YOU KNOW US PROBABLY BETTER THAN WE KNOW OURSELVES.

I'D LIKE TO ASSUME YOU HAVE A LOGICAL REASON FOR KEEPING THAT LITTLE PYSCHOPATH AROUND.

I'VE TRIED TO RELATE TO HIM, WORK WITH HIM, BUT THE MORE I KNOW HIM, THE ANTSIER I GET. PROFESSOR, STORM, I'M AT THE POINT WHERE I'M NOT SURE IF I WANT TO BELONG...

...TO ANY OUTFIT THAT HAS WOLVERINE AS A MEMBER.

DOES THAT INCLUDE THE HUMAN RACE?

I, TOO, ABHOR WOLVERINE'S VIOLENT NATURE. BUT HE IS NOT AN X-MAN BECAUSE OF HIS PERFECT, STERLING CHARACTER. IT IS BECAUSE OF HIS POTENTIAL FOR GOOD. OUR DUTY AS X-MEN IS TO HELP HIM ACHIEVE THAT POTENTIAL. TO DENY WOLVERINE WOULD BE TO DENY OUR TRUE REASON FOR BEING. WHY DOES ANGEL NOT UNDERSTAND THAT?

HE DOES, STORM, BUT HE WONDERS IF THAT GOAL IS WORTH THE COST. I MUST CONFESS THAT, OCCASSIONALLY, SO DO I.

IN THE X-MEN'S HANGER COMPLEX --A MILE FROM THE MANSION, HIDDEN BENEATH THE WOODS THAT COVER MUCH OF THE SPRAWLING ESTATE-- **SEAN CASSIDY** IS WORKING ON THEIR MODIFIED SR-71 BLACKBIRD, AIDED BY **PETER RASPUTIN** AND WATCHED BY PETER'S SISTER, **ILLYANA**.*

LIFT UP THE ENGINE, WILL YE, PETER?

OF COURSE, SEAN.

WITH A THOUGHT, PETER TRANSMUTES HIS FLESH-AND-BLOOD BODY...

* AS **BANSHEE**, SEAN WAS HIMSELF AN X-MAN, UNTIL INJURIES FORCED HIS RETIREMENT-- L.

...INTO THE SUPER-STRONG, NIGH-INVULNERABLE ORGANIC ARMORED FORM OF **COLOSSUS**.

GENTLY DOES IT, LAD.

ALL RIGHT, PETER. SET HER DOWN.

〈OH, PIOTR NIKOLIEVITCH--〉

〈WILL *I* BE ABLE TO TURN TO STEEL LIKE YOU WHEN I AM GROWN UP?〉

〈I DO NOT KNOW, ILLYANA NATALAYNOVNA? DO YOU WANT TO?

〈I THINK I WOULD LOOK FUNNY.〉

WHAT'S SHE SAYIN', PETER?

SHE WONDERS IF SHE IS A MUTANT. PROFESSOR XAVIER CONTACTED OUR PARENTS, TO TELL THEM SHE IS SAFE. PERHAPS, BEFORE SHE RETURNS TO RUSSIA, HE SHOULD EXAMINE HER...

YE SOUND SAD, SON. D'YE MISS Y'R HOME?

OH--HULLO, KURT. WHAT BRINGS YE HERE?

THE PROFESSOR WANTS TO SEE YOU IN THE MANSION, SEAN.

BAMF

TELL HIM I'LL BE ALONG DIRECTLY, AS SOON AS I'VE TIDIED UP.

FINE. AUF WEIDERSEHN, ALL.

SOON...

CHARLES? I BEG Y'R PARDON, MISS, I WAS LOOKING F'R PROFESSOR XAVIER.

I'M SEAN CASSIDY. CAN I HELP YE?

I'M *THERESA ROURKE.* YOUR COUSIN TOM ASKED ME TO GIVE YE THIS. IT'LL EXPLAIN WHO I AM... AND WHY I'M HERE.

BLACK TOM CASSIDY *IS A ROGUE --AND HE AND SEAN ARE OLD BITTER FOES--YET BANSHEE NEVER DOUBTS THE TRUTH OF WHAT HE READS. HE'D MARRIED YOUNG, FOR LOVE, AND THEY'D HAD A GLORIOUS HONEYMOON TOGETHER BEFORE DUTY SUMMONED HIM AWAY.*

WHEN HE RETURNED ***MAEVE ROURKE CASSIDY*** *WAS DEAD.*

THERESA, D'YE KNOW WHAT THIS SAYS?

I DO...

... FATHER.

STANDING OVER HIS WIFE'S GRAVE, SEAN THOUGHT HIS HEART WOULD CRACK WITH GRIEF. NOW, FACING THE DAUGHTER HE NEVER KNEW HE HAD...

... HE WONDERS IF IT WILL BREAK WITH **JOY.**

NEARBY, PROFESSOR XAVIER HAS BEEN TELEPATHICALLY EAVESDROPPING ON THE SCENE. AS HE TACTFULLY BREAKS CONTACT, HIS SMILE TELLS THE X-MEN--AND THEIR GUEST, ***SPIDER-WOMAN***--*THAT THE REUNION IS ALL THEY HOPED IT WOULD BE.*

**SHE MET THE X-MEN--AND THEY MET TRACY--IN SW # 38--L.*

BUT ONE WOMAN DOESN'T COMPLETELY SHARE THE OTHER'S HAPPINESS.

MOIRA?

DR. MACTAGGERT. IS ANYTHING THE MATTER?

NO, SPIDER-WOMAN. I'M FINE.

I'M JUST STEPPING OUT FOR A BREATH OF AIR.

MOIRA, WE ARE FRIENDS, SOMETHING *IS* TROUBLING YOU. I WOULD LIKE TO HELP, IF I MAY.

I'M GLAD FOR SEAN, ORORO. YET I'M ALSO FRIGHTENED, AND JEALOUS--AND A WEE BIT ASHAMED. I LOVE HIM. HE LOVES ME. BUT NOW HE HAS SOMEONE ELSE TO LOVE. I SEE THERESA AS A RIVAL...

...AND I FIND MYSELF *RESENTING* HER FOR THAT.

I KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN. I SEE ***STEVIE HUNTER***-- KITTY'S DANCE TEACHER-- THE SAME WAY, AS A THREAT TO THE SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP I HAVE WITH KITTY.

THERESA REPRESENTS SOMETHING I CANNA GIVE SEAN:-

--A CHILD

I HAD ONE AND HE TURNED INTO A MUTANT MONSTER.* I DAREN'T HAVE ANOTHER. SEAN SAYS IT DOESN'T MATTER TO HIM, BUT IT DOES TO ME.

AYE, WIND-RIDER WE'RE BOTH FACING SOME ROUGH DAYS AHEAD, I FEAR.

WE'LL SURVIVE, MOIRA. WHATEVER HAPPENS.

WILL WE? I HOPE SO.

* PROTEUS, FACED AND FOUGHT IN X-MEN #S 125-128 -- GUESS WHO?

SATURDAY NIGHT-- AND ON A DESERTED LOWER MANHATTAN SIDE STREET...

... A MANHOLE COVER IS SHOVED OPEN...

7

... AND A HULKING, RAG-CLAD MANFORM PULLS HIMSELF UP INTO THE GLOW OF A FULL MOON.

IT HAS BEEN SO LONG...

... SINCE *CALIBAN* HAS SEEN THE SKY.

ELZO KROTT

CALIBAN SENSES PEOPLE BUT NONE ARE NEARBY. CALIBAN MUST BE CAREFUL THOUGH. THEY WILL CHASE HIM IF THEY SEE HIM. THEY WILL TRY TO... *KILL* HIM.

CALIBAN FEARS. BUT CALIBAN IS SO ... *LONELY.*

HE SENSES HIS OWN KIND. SO NEAR. SO STRONG. THERE! IN THAT BUILDING! CALIBAN WILL FIND THEM, AND THEY WILL BE HIS FRIENDS FOREVER.

ATOP THE SELFSAME SKYSCRAPER--700 FEET ABOVE THE STREET--STORM, SPIDER-WOMAN (IN HER NORMAL IDENTITY AS **JESSICA DREW**), STEVIE HUNTER AND KITTY PRYDE...

...STEP OUT OF AN ELEVATOR AND INTO INFINITY!

INFINITY

THEY'RE HERE AS GUESTS OF THE NIGHTCLUB'S FEATURED PERFORMER--

--A MUTANT FRIEND OF THE X-MEN'S WHO VERY NEARLY BECAME A MEMBER OF THE TEAM--**DAZZLER!**

THIS PLACE CERTAINLY LIVES UP TO ITS REPUTATION. I'VE CERTAINLY SEEN NOTHING LIKE IT IN SAN FRANCISCO, BUT THEN I'VE ONLY RECENTLY SETTLED DOWN THERE.

IT IS OUR PLEASURE, JESSICA.

MS. DREW, ARE YOU REALLY A PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR? WHAT KIND OF CASES DO YOU INVESTIGATE? DO YOU CARRY A GUN?

THANK YOU FOR INVITING ME, ORORO.

KITTEN, CALM DOWN. YOU'RE PUSHING. THERE IS A FINE LINE BETWEEN YOUTHFUL EXUBERANCE AND RUDENESS.

AND I JUST CROSSED IT, HUH?

YOU'RE CLOSE, KIDDO.

THE REPRIMAND IS GENTLE AND, THOUGH KITTY TAKES THE HINT, IT DAMPENS HER BUBBLY MOOD NOT A WHIT. SHE'S LOOKING FORWARD TO AN EXCITING EVENING.

SHE'S ABOUT TO GET HER WISH!

HUMANS!

JOE! RUDI! LOOK!

HUH? HOLY--! WHAT IN BLAZES IS *THAT*?!

IN THE PAST, CALIBAN HAS TRIED TO EXPLAIN THAT HE COMES IN PEACE, MEANS NO HARM. NO ONE EVER LISTENED.

THEY ALWAYS REACTED AS THESE SECURITY GUARDS DO, WITH FEAR AND REVULSION, HATRED --AND **VIOLENCE!**

HOLD IT, MISTER! ONE MORE STEP AN' WE'LL *FIRE!*

I'M WARNING YOU!

EMOTIONS SWIRL LIKE RIP-TIDES AROUND CALIBAN.

HE ABSORBS THEM ALL, SILENTLY SCREAMING AT THE AGONY THEY CAUSE HIM...

BLAM

...AS HE CONVERTS THEIR POWER INTO A PALPABLE PHYSICAL FORCE AND HURLS THEM BACK AT THE GUARDS.

CALIBAN... ***HURT*** THESE HUMANS. HE DID NOT MEAN TO. THEIR EMOTIONS WERE TOO STRONG. CALIBAN COULD NOT CONTROL THEM.

CALIBAN SENSES HIS PEOPLE ABOVE HIM. HE MUST GO TO THEM AND EXPLAIN. THEY WILL UNDERSTAND.

JESSICA, YOU LOOK DISTRACTED...

I THOUGHT I HEARD A GUNSHOT, AND A SCREAM. BUT THE SOUNDS WERE SO FAINT

I'M PROBABLY IMAGINING THINGS.

SHUSH, YOU TWO! THEY'RE INTRODUCING ***DAZZLER!***

ABSOLUTE DARKNESS SHROUDS THE STAGE.

*AND THEN, MAGICALLY, **SHE** IS THERE,--A LITHE, SLEEK SHAPE CLAD IN SKINTIGHT SILVER, A CREATURE OF JOYOUS SOUND AND LIGHT.*

*AS DAZZLER SINGS, SHE USES HER MUTANT POWERS TO CREATE A LIGHTSHOW OF INFINITE BEAUTY AROUND HER, THE LIGHT SHIFTING SO NATURALLY IN COLOR AND INTENSITY AND PATTERN TO MATCH HER MOOD.. THAT IT SEEMS TO BECOME A THING ALIVE. THE EFFECT IS **MAGNIFICENT!***

OUT OF THAT DARKNESS, A DRUM IS HEARD, THEN GUITARS, FINALLY A WOMAN'S VOICE.

*HER NAME IS **ALISON BLAIRE** AND SHE'S DOING WHAT SHE LOVES BEST.*

HER AUDIENCE RETURNS THE FEELING, WITH INTEREST.

SHE RUNS A GAMUT OF STYLES -- ROCK, RHYTHM AND BLUES, SOUL, FOLK, COUNTRY, POP --AND DOES THEM ALL WELL. SHE'S STILL A DIAMOND IN THE ROUGH, BUT NONE PRESENT CAN DENY HER POTENTIAL OR TALENT.

BUT AS THE SET PICKS UP STEAM...

INFINIT

...CALIBAN EMERGES FROM THE ELEVATOR.

ORORO-- SCREAMS! SOMETHING'S HAPPENING AT THE OTHER END OF THE CLUB.

YOU GUYS STAY HERE AND ENJOY THE SHOW.

I'LL CHECK IT OUT.

KITTY --NO!

COME BACK HERE --AT ONCE!

RELAX, ORORO. I'LL BE OKAY.

AND I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN SLIP AWAY WITHOUT CREATING A FUSS.

HAVING CHANGED INTO HER X-MAN COSTUME-- HIDDEN IN A SECRET COMPARTMENT IN HER PURSE--SHE PHASES THROUGH TO THE DES-ERTED FLOOR BELOW AND...

LESSEE. I NEED TO GET MY BEARINGS. I'M LOOKING FOR THE BUILDING'S ELEVATOR CORE.

AND I THINK I JUST FOUND IT!

CRIPES! I'M FALLING!

WAIT! MY MUTANT ABILITIES DON'T JUST GIVE ME THE POWER TO PHASE THROUGH SOLID OBJECTS.

IF I CONCENTRATE HARD ENOUGH...

I CAN LITERALLY WALK ON AIR!

IF ORORO COULD SEE ME NOW, I BET SHE'D BE SO PROUD.

IF I GET MY HANDS ON THAT CHILD, I'LL WRING HER NECK! HOW DARE SHE PULL A STUNT LIKE THIS!

ORORO, THE COMMOTION SOUNDS LIKE IT'S GETTING WORSE!

WE HAVE TO GET OVER THERE.

BUT HOW, ORORO? IT'S WALL-TO-WALL PEOPLE AROUND US. YOU'LL NEVER PUSH THROUGH THE CROWD.

HMMM--SOMETHING'S UP. KITTY'S VANISHED FROM THE X-MEN'S TABLE AND ORORO LOOKS PRETTY UPSET.

IF SHE NEEDS A DISTRACTION SO SHE CAN EXIT UNNOTICED, I'M JUST THE LADY TO PROVIDE IT.

IMPROVISING OFF A WILD GUITAR RIFF...

... DAZZLER LAUNCHES INTO A SERIES OF COMPLEX ARPEGGIOS, THE LIGHTSHOW TRANSFORMING HER INTO A RAINBOW-COLORED STAR AS HER VOICE GAILY RACES UP AND DOWN THE HARMONIC SCALE.

THE AUDIENCE BREAKS INTO SPONTANEOUS APPLAUSE, AND WHILE ALL EYES ARE ON **DAZZLER**...

...ORORO AND JESSICA DART THROUGH A FIRE DOOR BESIDE THE STAGE...

...AND INTO A SERVICE HALLWAY...

... WHERE ORORO GENERATES A PEA-SOUP FOG TO HIDE THEM BOTH WHILE THEY CHANGE INTO COSTUME. MEANWHILE...

THESE PEOPLE ARE PANICKING!

AND THAT ***SHADOW*** MUST BE THE REASON WHY. IT'S HUGE! AND THOSE EYES--GLOWING, BURNING INTO MY MIND!

THIS IS MY CUE TO CALL FOR REINFORCE-MENTS.

I'VE A NASTY FEELING I'M FACING MORE THAN I CAN HANDLE--*HEY!*

LEGGO MY ARM!

YOU ARE LIKE CALIBAN!

YOU WILL COME WITH HIM, STAY WITH HIM, BE HIS FRIEND!

THE *HECK* I WILL!

STORM! SPIDER-WOMAN!

DON'T DESPAIR, SPRITE. YOU'LL BE SAFE IN A MOMENT.

RELEASE THE CHILD, CALIBAN THEN WE'LL TALK.

UNHAND THE CHILD, VILLAIN OR SUFFER THE CONSEQUENCES.

NO! YOU... ARE LIKE CALIBAN. YOU-- HE-- THE ***SAME!*** YET YOU THREATEN HIM, ATTACK HIM!

THE SPRITE-CHILD IS ***CALIBAN'S*** YOU WILL NOT TAKE HER!

WHUNFFF!

STORM'S UNHURT. THAT TABLE MERELY KNOCKED THE WIND OUT OF HER.

SO LONG AS CALIBAN HOLDS KITTY, I DAREN'T UNLEASH A FULL POWER ***VENOM BLAST.*** THE BIO-ELECTRIC ENERGY BOLTS MIGHT ***KILL*** HER.

STRONG AS CALIBAN SEEMS TO BE...

...I'VE NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO WADE IN AND TO MATCH HIM PUNCH FOR PUNCH.

THE DARK ANGEL GETS IN THE FIRST SHOT.

BUT THAT IS ALL.

POW!

HE REPLIES IN KIND...

...WITH SOMEWHAT MORE EFFECTIVE RESULTS.

SKRASH!

THE FEMALES WERE ...LIKE CALIBAN, YET THEY ACTED LIKE HUMANS.

IF CALIBAN LEAVES THE SPRITE-CHILD, PERHAPS THEY WILL NOT FOLLOW, WILL NOT TRY TO HURT CALIBAN ANYMORE.

BUT THEN, CALIBAN WILL BE ***ALONE*** AGAIN, AS HE HAS ***ALWAYS*** BEEN ALONE

IT WOULD BE BETTER TO DIE.

CALIBAN MUST HURRY. ONCE HE REACHES THE ***UNDERGROUND***, THEY WILL NEVER FIND HIM, OR THE SPRITE-CHILD, NO MATTER HOW HARD THEY SEARCH.

UPSTAIRS...

THE CROWD'S FREAKING OUT, SURGING TOWARDS THE ELEVATORS. STORM CAN'T HOLD 'EM BACK.

EXIT

THE DOORS THERE ARE JAMMED OPEN! IF THINGS AREN'T COOLED DOWN-- FAST-- PEOPLE ARE GONNA BE KILLED!

MY BAND SPLIT WITH EVERYONE ELSE, BUT I CAN GET THE MUSIC I NEED FROM THE CLUB'S MASTER SOUND SYSTEM.

I CAN'T SIMPLY "DAZZLE" THE CROWD. I DON'T WANT TO SHORT-CIRCUIT THEIR BRAINS AND STUN THEM. THAT WOULD LEAVE THEM HELPLESS.

MY LIGHTSHOW HAS TO CREATE A ***SPECIFIC*** EMOTIONAL MOOD. I'VE NEVER TRIED THAT KIND OF PRECISE CONTROL BEFORE--I'VE ALWAYS JUST LET THINGS HAPPEN. I DON'T KNOW IF I CAN DO IT.

CROSSING HER FINGERS, SHE SINGS.

...AND THE AUDIENCE RESPONDS. HEADS TURN, FRANTIC CRIES FADE AWAY, THE PANIC GRADUALLY EBBS. AND WHILE DAZZLER CASTS HER SPELL...

... STORM DIVES DOWN THE ELEVATOR SHAFT AFTER KITTY.

I CAN'T SEE CALIBAN. HE MUST BE NEAR THE BOTTOM.

THIS PIT--SO NARROW--WALLS FEEL AS IF THEY'RE CLOSING IN ON ME, CRUSHING ME!

IT'S A ***CLAUSTROPHOBIC ATTACK***--A BAD ONE! THE FEAR IS... ALMOST OVERWHELMING. IF IT SHATTERS MY CONCENTRATION, I'LL LOSE CONTROL OVER THE WINDS THAT HOLD ME ALOFT. I'LL FALL TO MY DEATH!

GODDESS--HELP ME! FOR KITTY'S SAKE, I MUST... ***HOLD ON!***

STEVIE, WHERE'S CALIBAN?

HE JUMPED DOWN THE ELEVATOR SHAFT, WITH KITTY! STORM WENT AFTER HIM!

I'M NOT NEEDED IN ***INFINITY***. DAZZLER SEEMS TO HAVE THE SITUATION THERE WELL IN HAND.

I'LL DO BETTER RUNNING DOWN THE WALL OF THE BUILDING. THE MAIN LOBBY IS THE ONLY UNLOCKED EXIT. EVEN IF I DON'T BEAT HIM DOWN, I'LL BE ABLE TO SPOT HIM WHEN HE EMERGES.

"HIS CLOTHES HAD THE STENCH OF THE SEWER ABOUT THEM. THAT NETWORK OF UNDERGROUND TUNNELS IS VIRTUALLY A CITY UNTO ITSELF. YOU COULD LOSE AN ARMY IN THAT LABYRINTH. IF IT IS CALIBAN'S NATURAL HABITAT, WE DAREN'T LET HIM REACH IT.

757

"THERE HE IS-- RACING FOR THE NEAREST MANHOLE!"

END OF THE LINE UGLY!

LEAVE CALIBAN *BE!*

HE MEANS NO HARM! HE IS... *LIKE* YOU! WHY DO YOU HURT HIM?

"LIKE" ME?!? WHAT THE DEVIL IS HE TALKING ABOUT?

HE DROPPED KITTY! NOW I CAN TRY TO STUN HIM WITH A VENOM BLAST!

YOU'RE STEALING A CHILD, CALIBAN, TAKING HER AGAINST HER WILL! YOU'VE *NO RIGHT* TO DO THAT!

CALIBAN IS TIRED OF LIVING ALONE!

ALL HE WANTS IS A *FRIEND*-- ONE TO TALK TO, TO CARE FOR, TO... LOVE. IS THAT SO MUCH TO ASK FOR?

SINCE BIRTH, CALIBAN WAS HATED BECAUSE HE WAS *DIFFERENT* BECAUSE OF HIS HIDEOUS APPEARANCE. HIS FATHER NAMED HIM FOR A *MONSTER!*

HE IS NO MONSTER! HE IS A *HUMAN BEING!*

STOP!

AAIII!

WHUZZAT...? A LIGHTNING BOLT!

I... I'M ON THE STREET! HOW'D I GET DOWN HERE?! THE LAST THING I REMEMBER IS CALIBAN GRABBING ME.

NO MORE. PLEASE. NO MORE!

SOME X-MAN I AM. I MUST HAVE FAINTED.

YOU LOOK AFTER SPRITE, STORM. I'LL HANDLE CALIBAN.

WILL... WILL YOU KILL, CALIBAN?

YOU'RE A MUTANT, AREN'T YOU. CALIBAN? THAT'S WHAT YOU MEANT WHEN YOU SAID WE WERE ALL THE "SAME"

CALIBAN DOES NOT UNDERSTAND YOUR WORDS. HE FELT YOUR PRESENCE IN HIS MIND, IN HIS HEART, LIKE A GREAT SHINING LIGHT.

NO. THAT WAS NEVER OUR INTENT.

IT DREW HIM OUT OF HIS UNDERWORLD HOME. HE COULD NOT HELP HIMSELF.

CALIBAN DID NOT WISH TO CAUSE ANYONE HARM. HE THOUGHT HE WAS UNIQUE BUT WHEN HE SENSED OTHERS LIKE HIMSELF, THE THOUGHT OF RETURNING TO THE UNDERWORLD, OF LIVING--FOREVER--ALONE...

... BECAME UNBEARABLE.

CALIBAN IS SORRY.

AS ARE WE. CALIBAN WE ARE OF ONE KIND--AS MUTANTS. COME WITH US, WE CAN OFFER A TRUE HOME, SAFETY--FRIENDSHIP.

WE HAVE ALL ACTED HASTILY TONIGHT. BUT THERE IS STILL TIME TO BEGIN AFRESH.

WHAT'S THAT?! SIRENS--HEADING THIS WAY!

PROBABLY THE POLICE. OUR ROLLS-ROYCE IS PARKED NEARBY. I'LL SUMMON A FOG TO COVER US WHILE WE SNEAK CALIBAN...

NEVER MIND, STORM. HE'S GONE HIS OWN WAY.

HE CHOSE TO RETURN TO HIS "UNDERGROUND" TO LIVE ONCE MORE IN DARKNESS. ALONE.

LATER...

WE SHOULD HAVE GONE AFTER HIM. I'VE BEEN AN OUTCAST--IN SOME WAYS, I STILL AM. I WOULDN'T WISH SUCH A FATE ON ANYONE.

NOR WOULD I. IF PROFESSOR XAVIER NOT FOUND US, WE MIGHT WELL HAVE BECOME LIKE CALIBAN--HUNTED, FRIGHTENED. ALONE. BUT WHAT IS DONE CANNOT BE UNDONE.

"FOR THE BEST OF REASONS, WE COMMITTED THE MOST TERRIBLE OF MISTAKES. THAT MUST NEVER HAPPEN AGAIN."

KITTY LISTENS IN SILENCE, HER OWN THOUGHTS DEEP AND SOMBRE. SINCE FIRST MEETING THE X-MEN, SHE'S ALWAYS FELT UNCOMFORTABLE AROUND **NIGHTCRAWLER** --NOT BECAUSE OF HIS PERSONALITY, BUT SOLELY BECAUSE OF HIS **APPEARANCE.**

TONIGHT'S ENCOUNTER WITH CALIBAN HAS SHOWN HER THE COST OF SUCH AN ATTITUDE. SHE HOPES WITH NIGHTCRAWLER, IT ISN'T TOO LATE TO TRY TO MAKE AMENDS.

MEANWHILE, BACK IN THE BERMUDA TRIANGLE...

...THE DAWN FINDS TWO FAMILIAR CASTAWAYS PONDERING AN INCREASINGLY DESPERATE SITUATION.

IF THIS ISLAND IS AS EXTRAORDINARY AS YOU SAY, LEE, SOMEONE SHOULD FLY OUT TO TAKE A LOOK AT IT.

ANYTHING'S POSSIBLE, SCOTT. BUT I'D FEEL A LOT MORE OPTIMISTIC ON A FULL STOMACH.

WELL, I COULD TRY USING MY OPTIC BLASTS TO STUN SOME FISH.

REMEMBER LAST ATTEMPT? YOU PULVERIZED THE POOR DEARS!

}AHEM!{

I THOUGHT MY ISLAND WAS DESERTED. HOW PLEASANT TO DISCOVER THAT I WAS MIS-TAKEN.

THAT VOICE --IT CAN'T BE!

OH, MAN, ARE WE GLAD TO SEE YOU!

LEE, WHATEVER YOU DO, DON'T MENTION MY NAME. IF HE HEARS THAT, IF HE HEARD ME REFER TO MY OPTIC BLASTS--IF HE EVEN **SUSPECTS** WHO I TRULY AM--

--WE'RE BOTH AS GOOD AS DEAD!

I AM--MAGNETO!

I BID YOU WELCOME TO MY NEW HOME. THOUGH YOUR ARRIVAL WAS UNANTICIPATED, I SHALL DO ALL I CAN TO ENSURE THAT YOUR STAY IS AS PLEASANT...AS POSSIBLE.

AS THE HOST SPEAKS, SCOTT FEELS A FIST OF ICE CLOSE TIGHT AROUND HIS HEART. ALONE, IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE, WITH AN INNOCENT WOMAN BY HIS SIDE AND NO WAY TO ESCAPE, MUCH LESS SUMMON ASSITANCE...

... HE STANDS FACE-TO-FACE WITH THE **MASTER OF MAGNETISM**, THE THE X-MEN'S OLDEST, DEADLIEST **FOE**.

HE CAN'T WAIT TO SEE WHAT HAPPENS NEXT.

NEXT: AND THE DEAD SHALL BURY THE LIVING

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THE UNCANNY X-MEN™

AND THE *DEAD* SHALL BURY THE *LIVING!*

Cockrum & Rubinstein

Cyclops. Storm. Nightcrawler. Wolverine. Colossus. Children of the atom, students of Charles Xavier, MUTANTS — feared and hated by the world they have sworn to protect. These are the STRANGEST heroes of all!

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE UNCANNY X-MEN! ™

CHRIS CLAREMONT WRITER / DAVE COCKRUM & JOSEF RUBINSTEIN ARTISTS / JANICE CHIANG LETTERER / GLYNIS WEIN COLORIST / LOUISE JONES EDITOR / JIM SHOOTER EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

AND THE DEAD SHALL BURY THE LIVING!

TO THE WORLD AT LARGE, CHARLES XAVIER IS A BRILLIANT, ICONOCLASTIC SCIENTIST AND TEACHER, ONE OF THE FOREMOST AUTHORITIES ON HUMAN GENETICS, FOUNDER OF THE **SCHOOL FOR GIFTED YOUNGSTERS** IN SALEM CENTER, NEW YORK.

A SELECT FEW KNOW THAT HE IS ALSO A **MUTANT**--PROBABLY THE MOST POWERFUL TELEPATH ON EARTH--AND THAT HIS SCHOOL SERVES AS HEADQUARTERS FOR THE BAND OF MUTANT SUPER HEROES, ESTABLISHED BY HIM IN PART TO PROTECT HUMANITY FROM THE DEPREDATIONS OF OUTLAW MUTANTS.

OVER THE YEARS, THE **UNCANNY X-MEN** HAVE HAD THEIR SHARE OF SUCCESS AND FAILURE, TRIUMPH AND TRAGEDY. OF LATE, XAVIER HAS BECOME CONVINCED THAT THEY WILL SOON FACE THEIR GREATEST TEST...

...AGAINST THE ONE FOE THE CURRENT TEAM HAS **NEVER** DEFEATED.

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MAGNETO!

ORIGIN, UNKNOWN. ALTHOUGH HIS FEATURES ARE CAUCASIAN, PROBABLY NORDIC--ANTECEDENTS, UNKNOWN. MASTER OF MAGNETISM, ABLE TO MANIPULATE AWESOME ENERGIES WITH CHILDISH EASE. UNLIKE ME, HE BELIEVES THAT HOMO SAPIENS AND HOMO SUPERIOR CAN *NEVER* LIVE TOGETHER IN PEACE.

ALREADY, MUTANTS ARE FEARED AND HATED SIMPLY BECAUSE WE EXIST. IF WE DO NOT CONQUER AND SUBJUGATE HUMANITY, MAGNETO PROPOUNDS, WE WILL BE DESTROYED. AND WHEN THAT VICTORY IS WON...

...MAGNETO MEANS TO RULE THE WORLD THAT IS LEFT.

HE WAS THE FIRST "EVIL" MUTANT THE X-MEN FOUGHT, AND TO THIS DAY, REMAINS OUR DEADLIEST ENEMY.

I HAD JUST FORMED THE ORIGINAL TEAM--

"--*CYCLOPS, BEAST, ANGEL, ICEMAN* AND *MARVEL GIRL*-- WHEN HE ATTACKED THE CAPE CITADEL MISSILE BASE. ACTING WITH EXCEPTIONAL COURAGE AND SKILL...

" MY PUPILS DROVE HIM AWAY.

"WHEN NEXT WE FOUGHT, MAGNETO HAD GATHERED HIS OWN TEAM -- A *BROTHERHOOD OF EVIL MUTANTS*, CONSISTING OF MASTERMIND, THE TOAD, QUICKSILVER AND THE SCARLET WITCH.

"EACH BATTLE ENDED WITH HIS DEFEAT.

"ONE SUCH--AT THE HANDS OF HIS OWN MUTANT CREATION, *ALPHA*-- RESULTED IN HIS FORCED REGRESSION TO INFANCY. I THOUGHT THEN THAT HIS THREAT WAS ENDED FOREVER.

"BUT THAT WAS NOT TO BE.

"OUR LATEST CONFRONTATION--THIS TIME INVOLVING THE "*NEW*" X-MEN --OCCURED IN AN INSTALLATION BURIED BENEATH AN ACTIVE ANTARCTIC VOLCANO. ALL CONCERNED WERE FORTUNATE TO ESCAPE WITH THEIR LIVES."

"ALIEN SCIENCE RESURRECTED HIM, RESTORED HIM TO ADULTHOOD EVEN MORE POWERFUL THAN BEFORE.

SINCE THEN, NOTHING HAS BEEN HEARD FROM MAGNETO. WHY THEN AM I SO CERTAIN THAT HE IS PLANNING SOME DEVILTRY? I HAVE NO PROOF, ONLY MY INSTINCTS...

YET I'M SURE I'M RIGHT. I HAVE COME TO KNOW THE MAN -- HOW HE FEELS AND THINKS -- AND TO REALIZE THAT IN A GREAT MANY WAYS, IN *TOO* MANY WAYS...

...MAGNETO AND I ARE UNCOMFORTABLY ALIKE.

HIYA, PROFESSOR! HAVE I GOT A SURPRISE FOR YOU!

MY DATA SCREENS -- MY COMPUTERS -- WHAT?!!

KITTY!

PREEEEE-SENTING -- THE ALL NEW, ALL DIFFERENT, ALTOGETHER STUNNING -- *SPRITE!*

WHAT DO YOU THINK, PROFESSOR? PRETTY SNAZZY, HUH?

I REALLY HATE THAT CLUNKY OLD UNIFORM YOU GAVE ME. IT'S POSITIVELY *ANTIQUE!* I FIGURED I'D MAKE SOME IMPROVEMENTS AND...

KATHERINE PRYDE! HOW OFTEN HAVE I TOLD YOU...

...THAT I AM *NEVER* TO BE DISTURBED WITHOUT PERMISSION WHEN I AM WORKING. BY PHASING THROUGH THE WALL, YOU COMPLETELY DISRUPTED THE COMPUTER'S CIRCUITRY.

ALL THE DATA I HAD ON-SCREEN AND IN TEMPORARY STORAGE WHEN YOU ENTERED HAS BEEN IRRETRIEVABLY LOST!

I'M SORRY, PROFESSOR.

AN INDIVIDUAL COSTUME HAS TO BE EARNED. IT IS AWARDED AT GRADUATION, NO SOONER. PLEASE GO, KITTY. I HAVE A GREAT DEAL TO DO.

I'M A WHIZ AT COMPUTERS. I COULD HELP YOU...

YOU HAVE ALREADY DONE QUITE ENOUGH.

I WILL NOT TELL YOU AGAIN, CHILD. LEAVE. *NOW!*

AND THIS TIME, USE THE DOOR!

I GET THE HINT, PROFESSOR!

HE DIDN'T HAVE TO USE HIS MENTAL POWERS TO FORCE ME OUT ISN'T HE AWARE THAT AT CLOSE RANGE, HIS TELEPATHIC SHOUTS *HURT*? UNLESS... THAT WAS HIS INTENTION...

NEARBY, KITTY'S FELLOW X-MEN ARE BUSY REPAIRING THE SCHOOL'S **DANGER ROOM**, A TASK THEY ARE BEGINNING TO SUSPECT WILL NEVER END.

ISN'T AMERICA WONDERFUL, MY FRIENDS? WHERE ELSE COULD A WOMAN REVERED AS AN AFRICAN GODDESS BECOME A *MECHANIC* INSTEAD?

SYSTEM FOUR CHECKS, KURT.

DANKE, ORORO. THAT'S FOUR DOWN AND A THOUSAND TO GO.

GUYS, I KNOW THIS MAY BE HERESY, BUT WHY BOTHER?

THE DANGER ROOM'S SUPPOSED TO TRAIN US, TO HONE OUR POWERS AND SKILLS. BUT THE ELF AND I ACCOMPLISH THAT WITH OUR IMPROVISED HUNTS AND THEY'RE A HECKUVA LOT MORE *FUN!*

THAT'S BECAUSE YOU ALWAYS WIN. I MUST OWE YOU A COUPLE OF DOZEN CASES OF BEER...

TWENTY-NINE TO BE PRECISE. AN' WHEN IT COMES TO THE *IMPORTANT* THINGS IN LIFE--NAMELY BREW AN' BROADS--

--I AM *VERY* PRECISE.

THE ROOM'S PURPOSE IS FAR MORE EXTENSIVE THAN THAT, WOLVERINE--AND INTEGRAL TO THE PROPER FUNCTIONING OF BOTH THE SCHOOL AND THE X-MEN.

WELL, LOOK WHO'S PHASING THROUGH THE CEILING!

HULLO, KITTEN!

HMMM--SHE LOOKS MISERABLE. I WONDER IF IT HAS ANYTHING TO DO WITH THOSE OUTRAGEOUS CLOTHES SHE'S WEARING.

SHE NEEDS CHEERING UP--AND WE COULD USE A BREAK OURSELVES, THE OPPORTUNITY IS TOO GOOD TO LET PASS. WHEN KITTY PHASES, THE MOLECULES OF HER OWN BODY SLIP BETWEEN WHATEVER SHE'S MOVING THROUGH--WHETHER STEEL OR AIR.

BUT WHEN SHE WALKS ON AIR, SHE DOESN'T BECOME COMPLETELY IMMATERIAL. A STRONG GUST OF WIND, AND A CLAP OF THUNDER SHOULD SHATTER HER CONCENTRATION, THROW HER OFF-BALANCE.

YOW!

STORM'S PURVIEW IS WEATHER. AND IT TAKES ONLY A MOMENT'S CONCENTRATION FOR THOUGHT TO BECOME REALITY.

APPROPRIATELY STARTLED, KITTY BEGINS TO FALL.

BUT THE OTHER X-MEN HAVE PICKED UP STORM'S CUE. **NIGHTCRAWLER** MAKES THE FIRST MOVE.

RELAX YOUR BODY, KATZCHEN, AND I'LL SHOW YOU HOW WE USED TO DO THIS IN THE CIRCUS!

ALLEZ--

--OOP!

OVER TO YOU, LOGAN!

YYYYYIIIII--!

MUCH OBLIGED, BUB.

WOLVERINE!

PUN'KIN, I HATE TA SAY IT BUT WE GOTTA STOP MEETIN' LIKE THIS.

I THINK YER *BOYFRIEND* IS GETTING SUSPICIOUS.

CATCH, COLOSSUS!

BOYFRIEND?! I HAVEN'T GOT A--OH, HI, PETER!

I REST MY CASE.

BY THE BY, KID, WHAT ARE YOU WEARING?

IT'S A NEW X-MEN COSTUME I DESIGNED. D'YOU LIKE IT?

I THINK IT IS NEAT

IF YOU CANNOT SAY ANYTHING NICE, KURT--

I THINK IT IS ABSOLUTELY--

OW!

--SAY *NOTHING*! VERSTEHEN?

SUDDENLY, AN ASTRAL PROJECTION OF PROFESSOR XAVIER APPEARS BEFORE THEM.

X-MEN, REPORT TO THE BRIEFING ROOM.

I HAVE AN IMPORTANT MISSION FOR YOU.

THEIR DEPARTURE IS DELAYED UNTIL EVENING WHEN CHANCES OF DETECTION ARE MINIMAL, BUT BY MIDNIGHT...

... THEY ARE STREAKING SOUTH OVER THE ATLANTIC SOARING AT HYPERSONIC SPEED ALONG THE EDGE OF SPACE ITSELF. ABOARD THEIR SOLE REMAINING CRAFT--A SPECIALLY MODIFIED SR-71 BLACKBIRD.

THEIR DESTINATION IS THE BOTTOM OF THE EARTH.

THIS IS A *RECONAISSANCE* MISSION, NOTHING MORE. BUT SUPPOSE WE FIND SOMETHING?

SUPPOSE WE FIND MAGNETO?

WHAT CAN THE *FOUR* OF US DO?

I WISH *ANGEL* WERE HERE. WE COULD USE HIS EXPERIENCE. WE HAVEN'T HEARD FROM HIM SINCE HE LEFT THE MANSION AFTER OUR ARGUMENT ABOUT WOLVERINE.* HE BELIEVES THAT LOGAN IS TOO DANGEROUS TO BE AN X-MAN. *I* BELIEVE WE MUST ACCEPT WOLVERINE IN SPITE OF THE DANGER.

*LAST ISH --LOUISE.

I HOPE THIS ESTRANGEMENT IS NOT PERMANENT, BUT I FEAR THE CHASM THAT HAS GROWN BETWEEN US IS TOO WIDE, TOO DEEP.

GIN, TOVARISCH!

AGAIN?!?

THIS IS FLAMIN' EMBARRASSIN'!

WOULD YOU CARE FOR ANOTHER GAME?

ARE YOU KIDDIN'? I KNOW WHEN I'M BEIN' HUSTLED. THE WAY YOU PLAY CARDS, PETEY, I'M GLAD I NEVER TAUGHT YOU POKER.

I AIN'T USED TA LOSIN'. I THINK I'LL DROWN MY SORROWS IN A BREW AND SANDWICH CHASER. ANYONE ELSE WANT MUNCHIES?

HOLY--!

SURPRISE, SURPRISE--LOOK WHO'S SNOOZIN' IN THE STORAGE LOCKER!

RISE 'N' SHINE, PUN'KIN!

HMNRLFF...?

HEY!

LEGGO OF ME, YOU BIG BULLY!

WATCH THE MOUTH, KID!

GROUP, I BELIEVE WE HAVE HERE WHAT IS REFERRED TO IN THE TRADE AS A *STOWAWAY!*

KITTY!

WHAT IN THE GODDESS' NAME ARE YOU DOING HERE?

SHE DECIDED TO COME ALONG FOR THE RIDE?

THAT ISN'T FUNNY, KURT.

I'M AN X-MAN, AREN'T I? AND THIS IS AN X-MEN MISSION. WHY SHOULD *I* GET LEFT BEHIND!

BECAUSE YOU'RE AN X-MAN IN *TRAINING.*

WELL, NO ONE SAID I *COULDN'T* GO.

BESIDES, THIS IS A SCOUTING MISSION. WHAT COULD HAPPEN?

KITTY, THE MUTANT WE'RE AFTER IS *MAGNETO.* COMPARED TO HIM, THE ENTIRE *HELLFIRE CLUB...*

...IS NOTHING BUT A COLLECTION OF FIFTH-RATE AMATEURS.

I AM SORELY TEMPTED TO TURN THIS AIRCRAFT AROUND AND TAKE YOU HOME, YOUNG WOMAN, EVEN THOUGH WE'VE NEARLY REACHED OUR DESTINATION. BUT THE PROFESSOR SAID THAT TIME WAS OF THE ESSENCE.

KITTY, THIS IS NOT A *GAME!*

I KNOW.

DON'T BE ANGRY, ORORO.

LITTLE ONE, I DO NOT WANT TO SEE YOU HURT OR KILLED--OR US HURT OR KILLED --BECAUSE OF YOUR LACK OF EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING.

STORM?

YES, NIGHTCRAWLER?

PARDON MY INTERRUPTION, BUT WE'VE ARRIVED.

THAT'S A LIVE VOLCANO!

TRUE, KITTY. MAGNETO'S OLD BASE IS BURIED BENEATH IT.

HOW DO WE GET INSIDE?

ON OUR LAST VISIT, *KATZCHEN*--ABOARD A FLYING CARNIVAL WAGON--MAGNETO DROPPED US RIGHT INTO THE CALDERA...

...AND WE FLOATED DOWN THROUGH A THOUSAND METERS OF MOLTEN LAVA.

YOU'RE... KIDDING? AREN'T YOU?

KURT, WE AREN'T GOING TO DO THAT, ARE WE?

WHAT'S A MATTER, PUN'KIN? HAVIN' SECOND THOUGHTS ABOUT TAGGIN', ALONG?

TAKE THIS PARKA, KITTY. YOUR OLD COSTUME MAY HAVE BEEN...UNATTRACTIVE, BUT AT LEAST IT WAS INSULATED.

THERE'S THE TUNNEL.

THANKS, KURT. STORM, WHAT'S THAT?

WHEN THE WALLS WERE BREACHED AND LAVA FLOODED MAGNETO'S COMPLEX, WE WERE SEPARATED.

THE FOUR OF US, PLUS CYCLOPS AND BANSHEE, DESCENDED TO THE SAVAGE LAND, WHILE ***PHOENIX*** BLASTED AN ESCAPE ROUTE TO THE SURFACE FOR HERSELF AND THE BEAST.*

*X-MEN #113--L.

EACH GROUP MISTAKENLY THOUGHT THE OTHER WAS DEAD. IF ONLY WE'D STAYED TOGETHER ...IF ONLY...

WOLVERINE, YOU HAVE THE KEENEST SENSES. YOU TAKE THE POINT.

GOTCHA, STORM, I'M--KID, YOU'RE STILL WEARIN' THOSE FLAMIN' ***ROLLER-SKATES!***

NO PROBLEM, WOLVERINE! I'M WALKING ON AIR, NOT THE SNOW. THEY DON'T BOG ME DOWN.

HAVE WE REACHED THE BOTTOM?

LOOKS LIKE IT, STORM, WANT ME TO CUT THROUGH THE WALL?

LET COLOSSUS DO IT.

IF THERE IS LAVA ON THE OTHER SIDE ... HE'LL BE LEAST VULNERABLE TO IT.

AND SO, AFTER THE RUSSIAN X-MAN TRANSMUTES HIS BODY FROM FLESH AND BLOOD...

... TO SUPER-STRONG ORGANIC STEEL...

...OUR HEROES SOON FIND THEMSELVES IN A PLACE THEY REMEMBER ALL TOO WELL.

STRANGE. THE LAVA ENTERED FROM ABOVE. BY RIGHTS, THIS CHAMBER SHOULD HAVE BEEN FILLED TO THE BRIM.

AT LEAST THE VOLCANO KEEPS THINGS WELL HEATED.

HAVE YOU NOTICED? ONLY CERTAIN ROOMS HAVE BEEN CLEANED OUT, CERTAIN MACHINES EXPOSED. EITHER THIS WAS A PHENOMALLY SELECTIVE LAVA FLOW...

...OR SOMEONE ELSE HAS VISITED HERE SINCE OUR BATTLE.

I WONDER WHO?

I WONDER WHY?

KITTY, IF YOU MUST SKATE, DO SO ON AIR. THOSE WHEELS MAKE TOO MUCH NOISE ON THE FLOOR. A *DEAF* MAN COULD HEAR YOU COMING.

STORM--ALL OF YOU-- LOOK!

IT'S THE ROBOT MAGNETO BUILT TO CARE FOR US WHEN WE WERE HIS PRISONERS.

ALAS, POOR NANNY. I KNEW HER, HORATIO. A ROBOT OF INFINITE JEST.

BULL!

A MENTAL COMMAND...

SZ-KT!

... EXTENDS WOLVERINE'S CLAWS.

THEY'RE FORGED OF UNBREAKABLE ADAMANTIUM, HONED TO RAZOR-KEENESS, AND WOLVERINE KNOWS HOW TO USE THEM TO DEADLY EFFECT.

MY ONLY REGRET, BUB, IS THAT I'M CUTTIN' THE ROBOT--

--AN' NOT THE SLIME WHO BUILT HER!

NONE OF US HAVE PLEASANT MEMORIES OF OUR CONFINEMENT HERE, WOLVERINE.

BUT NONE OF US CAN GO OFF HALF-COCKED, EITHER. ALL RIGHT--TO FACILITATE OUR EXPLORATION OF THE COMPLEX, WE'LL HAVE TO SEPARATE. SPRITE...

I'LL GO WITH, PETER--I MEAN COLOSSUS.

DO NOT WORRY, STORM. I WILL TAKE EXCELLENT CARE OF HER.

AND I'LL KEEP *HIM* OUT OF TROUBLE, TOO.

C'MON, COLOSSUS! HOW ABOUT WE GO THIS *WAY!*

DOSVIDANYA, MY FRIENDS AND WISH ME LUCK!

I SHOULDN'T BE CONCERNED. KITTY IS IN THE SAFEST OF HANDS WITH PETER. BUT I STILL WISH SHE WAS WITH ME.

BY THE BLACK DEEP, MY PRAYERS HAVE BEEN ANSWERED. IT IS *SHE!*

I COULD DESTROY HER WHERE SHE STANDS. BUT THAT WOULD BE TOO QUICK, TOO EASY. HER TORMENT MUST BE AS EXQUISITE AS MY OWN.

STORM... ORORO... WIND... RIDER...

WHAT'S THAT?! WHO CALLS MY NAME?!

HAVE YOU SO SOON FORGOT HIM WHO YOU-- MURDERED!

GAROKK!

*HE WAS AN ORDINARY MAN, TRANSFIGURED BY ANCIENT, ARCANE FORCES INTO A LIVING GOD. HE WAS ALSO QUITE MAD. HE SOUGHT TO CONQUER THE **SAVAGE LAND** (A VAST UNSPOILED PREHISTORIC WILDERNESS NESTLED WITHIN ANTARCTICA'S ETERNITY MOUNTAIN RANGE).*

AT THE CLIMAX OF HIS BATTLE WITH THE X-MEN, HE WAS HURLED INTO A GREAT THERMAL PIT THAT STRETCHED DOWNWARD VIRTUALLY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH.

STORM WENT AFTER HIM.

HEAT PUSHING AGAINST ME, FORCING ME TO TACK. THAT TAKES US DEEPER INTO THE SHAFT. --*NO!* I MUSTN'T THINK ABOUT THAT!

A LIFE IS IN PERIL. THAT IS WHAT'S IMPORTANT.

ALMOST THERE-- HEAT, FUMES AFFECTING ME! IT'S SO HARD TO BREATHE!

REACH, MAN --REACH!

IMAGES COLLIDED IN HER MIND, GAROKK'S EYES MIRRORING THE ANCIENT TERROR WITHIN HER. WITHOUT MEANING TO, SHE HESTITATED.

...AND WAS LOST.

AARRRGH!

IN THAT INSTANT, STORM WAS NO MORE. THERE WAS ONLY ORORO, A CHILD...

...WHOSE PRIVATE-HELL WAS--AND IS--THE FEAR OF DYING ALONE, BURIED IN THE DARK.

THAT WAS MONTHS AGO.

YET THE MEMORIES ARE AS FRESH, AS CLEAR, AS IF IT HAD ONLY JUST HAPPENED.

IT DOES NO GOOD TO TELL MYSELF I TRIED MY BEST. I WAS ... *AFRAID*. AND BECAUSE OF MY FEAR, A MAN *DIED*.

OR SO I THOUGHT.

THERE'S NO ONE NEARBY. COULD IT BE A... GHOST? WORSE, COULD I BE IMAGINING THINGS?

I'D BEST USE MY RADIO MICRO-TRANSCEIVER TO CHECK WITH THE OTHERS.

WOLVERINE. ARE WE ALONE DOWN HERE? HAVE YOUR ENHANCED SENSES SPOTTED ANYTHING...UNUSUAL?

NEGATIVE, STORM. HEARD NOTHING, SEEN NOTHING, SMELT NOTHING--'CEPT US, OF COURSE.

THIS PLACE IS AS QUIET AS A TOMB.

THANK YOU.

I WISH THAT MADE ME FEEL MORE REASSURED.

WHAT ARE WE SUPPOSED TO BE LOOKING FOR?

ANYTHING OUT OF THE ORDINARY.

PETER, THIS WHOLE *PLACE* IS OUT OF THE ORDINARY!

IT IS HUGE, TOO--COVERING EIGHT CUBIC KILOMETRES. SOON AFTER OUR BATTLE WITH MAGNETO, LAVA EXPLODED THE MAIN POWER GENERATORS. WE ASSUMED THE BLAST DESTROYED THE ENTIRE COMPLEX.

SO MUCH FOR THAT THEORY.

UMMMM--I WONDER HOW MUCH REMAINS INTACT?

BEATS ME--BUT IF SPEED IS OF THE ESSENCE, I CAN COVER A LOT OF GROUND IN RECORD TIME. I'VE BEEN PRACTICING.

I AM A MAN WHO KNOWS HIS LIMITATIONS.

LOOK! NO MORE TUNNEL.

WANT ME TO PHASE THROUGH AND SEE WHAT'S ON THE OTHER SIDE?

NO. FEEL THE WALL. IT IS HOT. I THINK THAT BEYOND IT IS MOLTEN LAVA.

RIIIGHT--THE VOLCANO.

I WILL CONTACT STORM...

...TELL HER WE'VE FOUND NOTH--

--UNNNGNH!

NO!

PRACTICING WHAT--HOW NOT TO BREAK YOUR NECK?

POOH! YOU'RE JUST JEALOUS! CAN YOU DO BETTER?

PETER!

SOMEONE HIT HIM --BUT *WHO?!*

BEHOLD, CHILD THE RUIN OF A LIVING GOD!

BEHOLD-- GAROKK!!

I AM *KEEPER* OF THIS PLACE, CHARGED--NAY, *CONDEMNED*-- BY MAGNETO TO DEFEND IT AGAINST ALL INTRUDERS.

DO NOT RESIST ME, CHILD, OR ATTEMPT TO ESCAPE. NEITHER WILL SUCCEED. I OFFER A QUICK DEATH.

GEEZ!

THANKS A LOT!

I HOPE YOU WON'T BE TOO UPSET...

...IF I TURN YOU DOWN.

THE CHILD-- PASSING RIGHT THROUGH ME *AHHRRR!*

I HURT HIM. BUT *HOW?!* I'VE PHASED THROUGH PEOPLE BEFORE AND THEY NEVER FELT A THING! WHY WAS GAROKK DIFFERENT?!

PETER-- WAKE UP! C'MON, MOVE! *PLEASE!*

I CAN'T RAISE ANYONE ON MY RADIO --THERE'S TOO MUCH STATIC.

NEVER HAVE...I EXPERIENCED SUCH SENSATIONS. YOU WILL... *PAY* FOR THAT, CHILD, WHEN I SMASH THIS WALL...

...I WILL SURVIVE THE LAVA FLOW...

...AND COLOSSUS MIGHT SURVIVE...

...BUT WILL *YOU?!?*

ORORO!

THAT SCREAM-- KITTY! THERE'S A PRESSURE SHIFT IN THE AIR-- SOMETHING'S PUSHING IT TOWARDS ME.

AND THE TEMPERATURE IS SHOOTING UP-- OH, GODDESS NO!

THE SHIELD WALL MUST HAVE BEEN BREACHED. LAVA IS FLOODING THE COMPLEX.

KITTY--! IF SHE WAS IN ITS PATH...

I CANNOT SOLELY THINK OF MY DEAR ONE. I MUST ACT TO SAVE US ALL. I'LL PULL IN A WIND FROM OUTSIDE...

"...GENERATING THE HIGHEST SPEEDS AND LOWEST TEMPERATURES POSSIBLE...

"...AND HURL IT UP THE TUNNEL AT THE LAVA FLOW!"

CRIPES! THE LEAST STORM COULD'A DONE BEFORE WHIPPIN' UP A HURRICANE...

...WAS GIVE US A LITTLE WARNIN'! HANG ON TIGHT, PAL. YOU FEEL THE HEAT FLASH BEFORE THE WIND STARTED? IF THERE'S LAVA IN THE TUNNELS AN' SHE'S TRYIN' TA STOP IT...

...THERE'S NO TELLIN' *HOW* MUCH POWER SHE'LL NEED!

SOONER THAN EITHER X-MAN EXPECTS, HOWEVER, THE TEMPEST ENDS--AS ABRUPTLY AS IT BEGAN.

EVERYTHING IS COATED IN ICE. IT IS SO... BEAUTIFUL. AND THE LAVA FLOW HAS COOLED AND SOLIDIFIED. WE ARE SAFE.

BUT WHAT OF PETER AND KITTY?

WOLVERINE! NIGHTCRAWLER! I NEED YOUR HELP!

WHAT'S THAT HISSING SOUND?! *COLOSSUS!* FROZEN SOLID, SKIDDING ACROSS THE FLOOR! HE'S SO CLOSE, COMING SO FAST--

WHUNFF!

IS SHE HURT?
STUNNED.
YOU ANY GOOD AT CLIMBIN' ICE?
I'LL NEVER KNOW UNTIL I TRY. WHY?

SOMEONE *THREW* PETEY OUTTA THAT TUNNEL. AN' THAT LAVA FLOW WAS PROBABLY NO ACCIDENT EITHER. I FIGURE WE'RE FACIN' MAGNETO HIMSELF, OR ONE OF HIS FLUNKIES.
FIND COVER, ELF. WE'VE GOT COMPANY.

I'VE ANOTHER DEATH TO ADD TO YOUR BUTCHER'S BILL, STORM, THAT OF THE *CHILD*, OVERWHELMED AND CONSUMED BY MOLTEN ROCK.
COMPARED TO WHAT IS IN STORE FOR YOU, HERS WAS THE GENTLEST OF ENDS!

UNCONSCIOUS, STORM? WHAT A PITY. YOU'RE MAKING THINGS TOO EASY FOR ME.
THE CHILD IS DEAD, AND YOU AND COLOSSUS LIE HELPLESS BEFORE ME. THAT LEAVES *TWO* OF YOUR PARTY UNACCOUNTED FOR.
NO DOUBT THEY ARE ALREADY MOVING INTO POSITION TO ATTACK ME. THEY THINK THEY HAVE THE ADVANTAGE...

...BECAUSE THEY CAN FUNCTION IN PITCH-DARKNESS
ALAS, I HAVE THE POWER TO *REMOVE* THAT DARKNESS.

HALF OUR FOE'S BODY IS FORMED OF MISSHAPEN ROCK, THE OTHER OF CRYSTAL-- AND THAT HALF IS GLOWING LIKE A STAR!

THE ICE FORMATIONS CREATED BY STORM'S BLIZZARD ARE ACTING LIKE MIRRORS, LIGHTING EVERY NOOK AND CRANNY AS BRIGHT AS *DAY!*
IT'S BLINDING ME--
--LEAVING ME NOWHERE TO HIDE!

I SEE YOU, NIGHTCRAWLER!

AND WHAT GAROKK SEES--HE SLAYS!

GAROKK? AREN'T YOU SUPPOSED TO BE DEAD YOURSELF?

YIKES! THE DISINTEGRATOR BEAMS HE FIRES FROM HIS EYES HAVE LOST NONE OF THEIR POTENCY.

AS THE ENERGY BOLT SLICES TOWARDS HIM...

BAMF

...NIGHT-CRAWLER *TELEPORTS* FROM THE CEILING...

...TO THE ONE PLACE WHERE GAROKK CAN'T BLAST HIM...

I WAS RESCUED--PULLED AT THE LAST INSTANT FROM THE OBLIVION I YEARNED FOR--

--BY *MAGNETO!*

YOUR ACCURSED CLAWS CANNOT HARM ME, CRETIN.

HE AIN'T KIDDIN'! WHERE I TAGGED HIM--

BUB, IF ETERNAL PEACE IS WHAT YOU CRAVE--

--I'LL BE MORE'N HAPPY TO OBLIGE YOU!

--HIS CRYSTAL SKIN REGENERATED ITSELF ALMOST IMMEDIATELY!

MEANWHILE, NEARBY...

AIR!!

I'M IN THE CAVERN AGAIN, AND ...AND I'M-- ALIVE!

I TOOK THE DEEPEST BREATH I COULD AND PHASED BEFORE THE LAVA HIT ME. I WAS SO SCARED! I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT WOULD HAPPEN. I THOUGHT I WAS GOING TO DIE!

BUT I DIDN'T DIE, AND THAT WAS WORSE...

...BECAUSE I KNEW THAT I DIDN'T DARE LET MY CONCENTRATION LAPSE...

...EVEN THE TINIEST BIT.

MOVING THROUGH THE ROCK WAS LIKE SWIMMING THROUGH MUD...

...BUT I MADE IT OUT. I SURVIVED!

I--WOWW!!

OF ALL THE SILLY, CARELESS, LAUGHABLE, DUMB THINGS TO DO --ESPECIALLY AT A TIME LIKE THIS! GETTING AROUND ON SKATES IS A LOT HARDER THAN DAZZLER MAKES IT LOOK.

I CAN'T HEAR ANYTHING-- NO VOICES, NO SOUNDS OF A FIGHT.

THAT'S BAD. IF THE X-MEN HAD BEATEN GAROKK...

...THEY'D BE OVER HERE LOOKING FOR ME. IF HE'S BEATEN THEM...

...I GUESS IT'S UP TO ME TO SAVE THE DAY.

AS KITTY MOVES SILENTLY-- SKATING ON AIR INSTEAD OF THE FLOOR-- TOWARDS THE COMPLEX'S CENTRAL CHAMBER...

THERE, IT IS DONE. A MINIATURE VERSION OF THE PIT INTO WHICH I FELL MONTHS AGO. INTO IT, I SHALL HURL STORM-

--ONLY THERE WILL BE NO ONE TO SAVE HER AT THE LAST INSTANT, AS MAGNETO DID ME!

NO! OH, NO!

UNNNHHH--I REALLY MUST PRACTICE... MY LANDINGS...

THE LAST ONE NEARLY--SPRITE!

STORM!

WAKE UP, YOU TWO! STORM'S ABOUT TO BE KILLED!

WOLVERINE, THROW ME AT GAROKK, HARD AS YOU CAN!

HMNH? WHUZZAT?!

DON'T ARGUE;-- THERE'S NO TIME. JUST...

... DO IT!

WHEN I PHASED THROUGH GAROKK BEFORE...

... I THREW HIM FOR A LOOP.

BAMF

I HOPE I CAN DO IT AGAIN.

HER PLOY IS SUCCESSFUL. GAROKK IS SHAKEN TO THE CORE OF HIS BEING. BUT AS NIGHTCRAWLER STRUGGLES TO FREE STORM FROM HIS GRASP, AS WOLVERINE AND COLOSSUS CHARGE FORWARD...

...GAROKK HURLS THE X-MEN ASIDE...

... AND WITH A MAD TRIUMPHANT LAUGH, LEAPS **WITH HER** INTO THE PIT!

STORM!

NEIN, ACH NEIN-- IT CANNOT BE!

SHADDUP! ALL OF YOU! I THOUGHT I HEARD SOMETHING!

ARE YOU, CERTAIN, WOLVERINE? I CANNOT SEE ANYTHING.

NOT SURPRISIN' STORM'S COSTUME'S NON-REFLECTIVE BUT I HEARD A WOMAN'S VOICE-- A GROAN.

STORM?! WHY DOES SHE NOT ANSWER?

ORORO!

SHE PROBABLY *CAN'T* ANSWER, PETER. ONE OF US HAS TO GO DOWN AFTER HER. I THINK I'M THE BEST CHOICE. NIGHTCRAWLER WILL BE AS IMPOSSIBLE TO SEE IN THOSE SHADOWS AS STORM, WHILE ALL THE SHINY STUFF ON MY COSTUME OUGHT TO REFLECT OUR FLASHLIGHT'S BEAMS FOR QUITE A WAYS.

WHAT DO YOU THINK, WOLVERINE? GUYS?

GO WITH IT, PUN'KIN. AN', GOOD LUCK.

THANKS.

THIS IS SO WEIRD.

A YEAR AGO, I WAS YOUR BASIC SUBURBAN TEEN-AGE WHIZ.

NOW LOOK AT ME.

I WONDER WHAT THE GANG IN DEERFIELD WOULD SAY IF THEY KNEW --OH!

I FOUND HER!

IF THE MISFIT WERE TO ARRIVE IN AN *INSTANT*, CHILD...

SHE'S ALIVE, BUT UNCONSCIOUS! AND ON A REAL TINY LEDGE! THE SLIGHTEST MOVE COULD KNOCK HER OFF! I'LL NEED NIGHTCRAWLER'S HELP...

...HE WOULD *STILL* BE TOO LATE TO SAVE YOU!

GAROKK!

INSTINCTIVELY, AS GAROKK LUNGES FORWARD, KITTY PHASES--HER BODY BECOMING AS EPHEMERAL AS SMOKE...

YYI!!

...AND THEN THE MAN-TURNED-GOD-TURNED-DEMON SCREAMS...

....AS HE LOSES HIS PRECARIOUS BALANCE AND PLUMMETS TO THE END HE HAD SO GLEEFULLY MEANT FOR STORM.

IT IS A SIGHT, A SOUND, A MEMORY THAT WILL HAUNT KITTY PRYDE FOR THE REST OF HER DAYS.

THE LEDGE--CRUMBLING!

CAN I PHASE AND WALK ON AIR WHILE CARRYING SOMEONE? I DON'T KNOW--AND THIS IS NO TIME TO TRY TO FIND OUT.

THROW ME A ROPE, GUYS--*FAST*--OR WE'LL FALL!

NO ROPE, *KÄTZCHEN*. AND I CAN'T CLIMB UP EITHER. THE ROCK WALL'S TOO FRAGILE AND *CRUMBLY* TOO SUPPORT MY WEIGHT. I'M AFRAID I'VE NO CHOICE...

...BUT TO RETURN WITH ORORO...

...THE WAY I CAME.

BAMF

KURT! LENIN'S GHOST--HIS SCREAMS.

CATCH HIM, PETEY.

THE STRAIN OF TELEPORTING WITH STORM MUST HAVE NEARLY KILLED YOU, MY FRIEND.

I WILL ENSURE THAT YOUR PAIN--AND SACRIFICE--WERE NOT IN VAIN.

THE TOSS DID THE TRICK, BIG FELLA. THEY'RE SAFE.

LATER, ABOARD THE BLACKBIRD, AFTER KITTY REJOINS THE TEAM, AND STORM AND NIGHTCRAWLER BEGIN TO RECOVER FROM THEIR ORDEAL...

MAGNETO WENT TO...CONSIDERABLE TROUBLE TO...EXCAVATE AND PROTECT HIS COMPLEX.

I THINK THOSE FACTS ALONE CONFIRM PROFESSOR XAVIER'S FEARS. MAGNETO *IS* UP TO SOMETHING.

YEAH? BUT WHAT?! AN' WHEN IS HE GONNA STRIKE? AN' WHERE?! AN' MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL, DARLIN', WHEN MAGGY FINALLY MAKES HIS MOVE...

HOW THE BLAZES ARE WE GONNA *STOP* HIM?

ROUGHLY 6,000 MILES NORTHWARDS, ON AN ISLAND IN THE HEART OF THE BERMUDA TRIANGLE, WE FIND **SCOTT SUMMERS**, STORM'S PREDECESSOR AS THE X-MEN'S LEADER.

YESTERDAY, LEE FORRESTER AND I FACED DEATH FROM EXPOSURE, THIRST, STARVATION. NOW, WE HAVE FOOD, CLOTHES, AND SHELTER--

--AND OUR SITUATION COULDN'T BE MORE *DESPERATE.*

BECAUSE THE MAN WHO SAVED US IS THE X-MEN'S OLDEST, DEADLIEST FOE-- ***MAGNETO***. HE DIDN'T RECOGNIZE ME UNDER MY BLINDFOLD, AND LEE DIDN'T BLOW MY "COVER," BLESS HER, WHEN I GAVE HIM A FALSE NAME.

IF HE LEARNS MY TRUE IDENTITY, I'M AS GOOD AS *DEAD!*

;AHEM!;

LEE--?

PRINCESS LEE, IF THIS OUTFIT IS ANYTHING TO GO BY. I WISH YOU COULD SEE ME, BUT I'M KIND OF GLAD YOU CAN'T.

I'VE FELT MORE DRESSED SKINNY-DIPPING!

I THINK I KNOW THE FEELING. I MUST LOOK PRETTY BIZARRE MYSELF.

YOU LOOK LOVELY.

HOW ARE YOU HOLDING UP?

FINE, CONSIDERING MY NEAR-TOTAL IGNORANCE OF THE SITUATION. SCOTT, WHAT IS GOING ON HERE?! WHY DOES MAGNETO SCARE YOU SO?

I'LL TELL YOU LATER. 'TIL THEN, TRUST ME. PLEASE.

GOOD MORNING. I TRUST YOU BOTH SLEPT WELL.

VERY WELL, THANK YOU.

EXCELLENT. BY THE WAY, ***CYCLOPS***, YOU MAY REMOVE THAT RIDICULOUS BLINDFOLD IF YOU WISH...

SO LONG AS YOU REMAIN MY... GUEST, YOUR VAUNTED *OPTIC BLASTS* WILL NOT FUNCTION. YOU ARE QUITE HELPLESS-- AND COMPLETELY AT MY MERCY.

NEXT ISSUE

A WORLD HELD HOSTAGE, WITH ONLY EIGHT LIVES STANDING BETWEEN IT AND ENSLAVEMENT! IN 30 DAYS:

I, MAGNETO!

X-MAIL

c/o MARVEL COMICS GROUP
575 Madison Avenue
New York, New York 10022

LOUISE JONES
EDITOR
DANNY FINGEROTH
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Dear Marvel,

When I was a very awkward teenager, the original X-MEN appeared. It was a godsend of sorts, helping me recover some sense of the goodness of an individuality I'd too often heard labelled "abnormal," "freakish," "gimpy," "weird," and worse. Throughout my high school days I read and enjoyed it. I loved it, but I always wanted some elusive thing more.

About two years ago when I decided to collect comics as a hobby, I was introduced to the new X-MEN. I fell in love with the comic, literally at first sight,and have come to love it more and more each passing month. You've created — and are continuing to create — one of the most striking cycles in modern mass (or folk) literature, of which comics are such an important branch, and something of very great personal meaning to me as well. The "more" I'd been wanting.

I — and my friends — encounter ourselves so beautifully in this book: in the violence and sensitivity of Wolverine, in Storm's poise and her hidden fears, in Peter's simplicity and his sometimes disastrous impetuosity, in Kitty's spunk and self-consciousness, and in all the myriad, exquisite illustrations of what's grand and funny and uptight and terrible about being human that abound in the heroes and villains and innocent bystanders who people the X-Men's adventures. Very much like the people of the ancient myths, your characters are larger than life but true-to-life representations of our species' experience — and of our own.

I failed to mention Kurt Wagner above because Nightcrawler is the most special of all the X-Men characters, new or old, to me. I alluded to being physically deformed earlier. I may not be pointy-eared and blue or able to go "bamf," but because my hands and feet are mis-shaped and I wear an artificial limb I can no more pass for "normal" than Kurt. So it is that his and my life experience and outlook most interlock; and he becomes both a mirror and a self-portrait of sorts, as well as a role model. Like Kurt, and sometimes with or through him, I discover that it truly is better to be a whole "me" than "normal," that humor helps defuse anger and to dissolve self-pity, that one's self is infinitely preferable to any "image," and so much more.

It's beautiful — very precious and beautiful — to see in 'Crawler month after month a deformed and physically challenged person endowed with courage, laughter, empathy, loyalty, slyness, skills, stubbornness, temper, anxieties, eccentricities, adventurousness, faith, a romantic spirit, sensuality, sensuousness, grace, charm, poise, self-pity, zaniness, seriousness, curiousity, playfulness, and by turns so many of our human traits. He's a terrific reminder of the ultimate truth too often put glibly and insincerely to America's millions of handicapped citizens: that "freaks" and "normals" share at heart one common human experience, one set of feelings and values and needs. I hope "the misfit" will be around for years — he's great company! — but if #141 were actually the last issue he ever appears in, I'd feel an enormous debt of gratitude towards those who collaborated on this book.

There aren't too many characters — in books, comics, movies or elsewhere — that us real-life "misfits" can lock onto to form or celebrate positive images of ourselves. (I can list examples on my fingers and toes: "The Elephant Man," "Long Ago, Tomorrow," "I Never Promised You A Rose Garden," some of Theodore Sturgeon's and Harlan Ellison's science-fiction stories, and the X-MEN.) So I thank you very, very much for entertainment, pleasure, intellectual stimulation, and your terrific example that different can be good — excellent, in fact!

You have my gratitude, admiration, affection and best wishes always.

Carolyn Amos
Fort Worth, TX

Just as there are stories that illuminate the human condition, there are letters that do the same. This is one of them. If ever we at Marvel — and this applies to *all* the creative writers and artists and letterers and colorists and editors, not merely those who work on the X-MEN — need a reason for doing what we do, or an incentive for doing it as well as humanly possible, this letter is it. We thank you for your most kind words, Carolyn. We'll ever strive to remain worthy of them.

Friends,

X-MEN #141..."Future Past." Claremont, you do such terrible things to your characters. Aaargh! I love it.

I like the scope of this story it spans the Marvel Universe of the present, past and potential with a sense of far-reaching doom. The Avengers gone, Defenders gone... seeing Franklin Richards gave a sense of reality. His death was a shock — after all, we knew this man when he was just a kid. And instead of becoming vague, this scope was kept in hand by being firmly anchored to the character of Kitty Pryde (or Kate Rasputin) who is at present the most interesting of the X-Men.

The graveyard of super heroes was a haunting scene.

Although I usually dislike monster robots, I like the Sentinels, probably because they have always been well-handled. Though I seldom like distopias (glum possible futures), this reminded me of one of the exceptions:Rich Buckler's grim world in "Deathlok," the best of the short-lived series of the 70's. Although I usually loathe alternate-future themes, I liked this one because it was convincing.

And the characters! It was so good to see them in maturity, both changed and unchanged. The future having implications for the present... Magnus, Franklin, and the suspiciously unnamed red-haired telepath-mutant meddling with the fabric of time.

Somewhere in the back of my head I had been grumbling to myself about the anti-climax following the death of Phoenix. No more.

Elizabeth Holden
120 Lewis St. / Apt.2
Ottawa, Ontario K2P 0S7, Canada

Chris & John;

X-MEN #141 yielded one of the most innovative story lines to come out of Marvel in a long time. It was a most enjoyable comic One question, though: why didn't Havok take part in the mutant rebellion? He was listed as apprehended on the cover; why was he never mentioned in the story?

Frederick J. Schiller
P.O Box 287a
Lansing, IL 60438

The Havok wanted poster on Ish #141's cover, Fred, was an old, outdated one that had been up for a while. At the time of our story, he had not only been apprehended — but *executed*, too.

Dear X-cellant People:

I am a newcomer to Marvel Comics, but right from the beginning, X-MEN was my favorite. Your creative team is one of the best in Marvel.

Some comments on the latest issue #(142):

(1) Nightcrawler either has to be Mystique's brother or it's just a coincidence about their similar appearances, right?

(2) I agree with Storm: Kenya is a beautiful country, with beautiful landscapes and places and a surprising amount of wildlife (especially Masai Mara National Park).

(3) The rebuilding of the Sentinels is going to be a very good plot; I'm looking forward to it.

Andres Gomez
P.O. Box 47074
Nairobi, Kenya, Africa

Mystique could be related to Nightcrawler, Andres. Or she might not be. Time will tell. As for the Sentinels, watch for them in X-MEN #'s 151 and 152, on sale this summer.

NEXT ISSUE: Scott and Lee are the guests of the X-Men's bitterest enemy, Magneto! Meanwhile, Xavier — fearful that the Master of Magnetism is up to no good — sends the rest of the team to search his Antarctic stronghold (last seen in X-MEN #113, remember?). It looks deserted. And if those aren't famous last words...! In thirty days, true believers, things start happening with a vengeance. Be here! Aloha!

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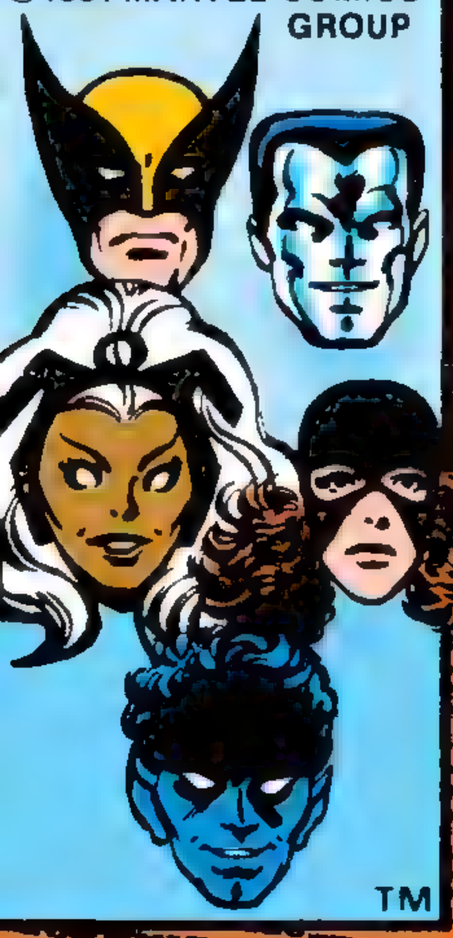

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SPECIAL DOUBLE-SIZED 150TH ISSUE!

X-MEN

VS.

MAGNETO

'NUFF SAID!

COLOR BY GLYNIS WEIN

Stan Lee PRESENTS:

THE UNCANNY X-MEN!™

MAGNETO...

...OFFER THE PEOPLE OF THE WORLD A *CHOICE*. YOU HAVE SEVEN DAYS TO CEDE ME *TOTAL POLITICAL CONTROL*...

...OR I WILL *END* LIFE ON EARTH AS YOU KNOW IT!!

CHRIS CLAREMONT
WRITER
DAVE COCKRUM
JOSEF RUBINSTEIN
and BOB WIACEK
ARTISTS
TOM ORZECHOWSKI
and JEAN SIMEK
LETTERERS
GLYNIS WEIN
COLORIST
LOUISE JONES
EDITOR
JIM SHOOTER
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

FROM AN ANCIENT ISLE HIDDEN DEEP WITHIN THE INFAMOUS BERMUDA TRIANGLE, MAGNETO'S THREE-DIMENSIONAL HOLOGRAPHIC IMAGE IS PROJECTED TO THE CAPITOL CITIES OF EVERY NATION ON EARTH.

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THE WHITE HOUSE, WASHINGTON, DC...

I AM A MUTANT-- HOMO SUPERIOR-- POSSESSING POWERS AND ABILITIES THAT SET ME APART, AND ABOVE, COMMON HUMANITY.

BECAUSE WE ARE DIFFERENT...

10 DOWNING STREET, LONDON...

... I AND MY FELLOW MUTANTS HAVE BEEN HUNTED DOWN AND SLAIN LIKE WILD ANIMALS. THOSE KILLINGS WILL STOP.

ALL KILLING WILL STOP.

THE KREMLIN, MOSCOW...

THE NUCLEAR POWERS HAVE THE CAPABILITY OF EXPUNGING ALL LIFE FROM THIS PLANET. DAILY, THE RISK OF SUCH A HOLOCAUST INCREASES, YET THE LEADERS OF THOSE NATIONS SEEM NOT TO CARE.

INDEED, SOME VIEW NUCLEAR WAR AS INEVITABLE.

THE GREAT HALL OF THE PEOPLE, PEKING...

SOME HAVE THE AUDACITY...

...TO VIEW SUCH A CONFLICT AS DESIRABLE. YOU ARE WELCOME TO EXTERMINATE YOURSELVES, IF YOU WISH.

THE PALACE, RIYADH, SAUDI ARABIA...

BUT IN THE PROCESS, YOU MIGHT DESTROY MY PEOPLE AS WELL. THAT I WILL NOT ALLOW.

WITHIN THE WEEK, ALL THE WORLD'S NATIONS WILL INITIATE COMPLETE DISARMAMENT OF THEIR NUCLEAR AND CONVENTIONAL WEAPONRY.

THE PRESIDENT'S HOUSE, NAIROBI, KENYA...

ANY STATE WHICH REFUSES TO COMPLY WITH THESE TERMS WILL BE DESTROYED.

ANY FOOLISH ENOUGH TO OPEN HOSTILITIES WITH ME WILL NOT SURVIVE TO REGRET IT.

MY TERMS ARE NOT NEGOTIABLE. THIS IS AN *ULTIMATUM*.

IGNORE IT AT YOUR PERIL.

END TRANSMISSION.

EVERY WORLD LEADER-- FROM REAGAN AND BREZHNEV DOWN TO THE LOWLIEST DICTATOR-- HEARD THAT SPEECH, BEHELD MY HOLOGRAPHIC IMAGE. MOST WILL CONSIDER IT AN ELABORATE HOAX. BUT THE GREAT POWERS KNOW ME FOR WHO AND WHAT I AM--THE ***MASTER OF MAGNETISM.*** THEY WILL TAKE ME SERIOUSLY.

BEING GREAT-- AND THEREFORE PROUD-- NONE WILL BE INCLINED TO YIELD WITHOUT A FIGHT. I MAY EVEN BE FORCED TO DEMONSTRATE THAT I **DO** HAVE THE POWER TO CRUSH THEM-- EVEN THOUGH I PRAY IT WILL NOT COME TO THAT.

IN THE END, THOUGH, THEY WILL SURRENDER.

AS USUAL, MAGNETO, YOU'RE CELEBRATING BEFORE YOUR VICTORY'S WON. SUPPOSE SOMEONE CALLS YOUR BLUFF?

*THE VOICE BELONGS TO **SCOTT SUMMERS**--WHO, AS **CYCLOPS**, ONCE LED MAGNETO'S ARCH-FOES, A TEAM OF MUTANT SUPER HEROES, THE **UNCANNY X-MEN**.*

*BY HIS SIDE STANDS **ALEYTYS FORRESTER**, SKIPPER OF THE FISHING TRAWLER **ARCADIA**, SCOTT'S BOSS AND FRIEND. ALTHOUGH MAGNETO CALLS THEM HIS "GUESTS," THEY ARE IN TRUTH HIS PRISONERS.*

YOU SHOULD KNOW ME BETTER THAN THAT, CYCLOPS. I DO NOT BLUFF.

WHY? WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS?!

TO MAKE THE WORLD *SAFE* FOR MUTANT-KIND.

YES, CYCLOPS. THAT'S *PRECISELY* WHY!

THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD SPEND OVER A *TRILLION* DOLLARS A YEAR ON ARMAMENTS. I INTEND TO DENY THEM THAT INDULGENCE. THE MONEY AND ENERGY DEVOTED NOW TO WAR WILL BE TURNED INSTEAD TO THE ERADICATION OF HUNGER, DISEASE, POVERTY.

I OFFER A *GOLDEN AGE*, THE LIKE OF WHICH HUMANITY HAS NEVER IMAGINED!

WITH MUTANTS RULING THE EARTH, AND *YOU* RULING THE MUTANTS.

YES.

IS THAT SO *TERRIBLE* A THING TO CONTEMPLATE?

WHAT ABOUT *FREEDOM*?

FREEDOM, Ms. FORRESTER? THERE ARE MORE PEOPLE *STARVING* TODAY THAN THERE ARE THOSE WHO CAN TRULY CALL THEMSELVES FREE. I OFFER PEACE AND A GOOD LIFE...

...OR A SWIFT AND TERRIBLE DEATH.

THE CHOICE IS THEIRS.

FOR MYSELF, I AM TIRED OF SEEING THINGS AS THEY ARE AND ASKING WHY, OF DREAMING OF THINGS THAT NEVER WERE AND ASKING WHY NOT. I HAVE THE POWER TO MAKE MY DREAMS REALITY.

AND THAT I SHALL DO.

BY THE WAY, CYCLOPS, WHO IS THIS *LEE FORRESTER* WOMAN? I THOUGHT YOU LOVED *JEAN* GREY. WHAT HAPPENED?

SHE DIED. LAST YEAR.

HOW?!?

"HER POWER AS *PHOENIX* WAS OUT OF CONTROL. UNCHECKED, IT COULD HAVE DESTROYED THE UNIVERSE.

I LOVE YOU, SCOTT. A PART OF ME WILL ALWAYS BE WITH YOU.

"THE *X-MEN* COULDN'T HELP HER--THOUGH WE TRIED..WE COULDN'T STOP HER.

"SHE COULD ONLY STOP HER-SELF.

SCOTT!!

JEAN!!

I AM TRULY SORRY.

SPARE ME YOUR HYPOCRISY, MAGNETO!

SHE WAS AN HONORABLE FOE, CYCLOPS--AS ARE ALL THE X-MEN--WORTHY OF RESPECT. I... CARED FOR HER.

I *GRIEVE* FOR HER. I KNOW... SOMETHING OF GRIEF. SEARCH THROUGHOUT MY HOMELAND, YOU WILL FIND *NONE* WHO BEAR MY NAME. MINE WAS A LARGE FAMILY, AND IT WAS SLAUGHTERED-- WITHOUT MERCY, WITHOUT REMORSE.

SO SPEAK NOT TO ME OF GRIEF, BOY. YOU KNOW NOT THE *MEANING* OF THE WORD!

EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE

I--THAT SIREN! WHAT IS IT?!

MY SENSOR COMPUTERS, SOUNDING THE ALARM.

WE ARE UNDER ATTACK.

SUBMARINE-LAUNCHED BALLISTIC MISSILES, CARRYING THERMO-NUCLEAR WARHEADS.

IF MY *INHIBITOR FIELD* WAS NOT NEUTRALIZING YOUR MUTANT POWERS, CYCLOPS, YOU COULD SHATTER THE WARHEADS WITH YOUR DEADLY *OPTIC BLASTS*.

BUT, REGRETTABLY, YOU ARE QUITE HELPLESS.

I, ON THE OTHER HAND, AM NOT. THE INHIBITOR FIELD HAS NO EFFECT ON ME.

I'LL SIMPLY MAGNETICALLY FREEZE THE MISSILES' FIRING CIRCUITRY, DISARM THE WARHEADS...

... AND THEN MODIFY THEIR TRAJECTORY EVER SO SLIGHTLY...

... SO THAT THEY FALL HARMLESSLY INTO THE OCEAN.

NOW THAT I'VE DEALT WITH THE IMMEDIATE THREAT...

... I'M FREE TO TURN MY ATTENTION TO THE VESSEL THAT LAUNCHED THE MISSILES, AND THE FOOLS WHO *ORDERED* THAT LAUNCH.

NO, YOU CAN'T! MAGNETO, LET THEM ALONE!

I WILL SHOW THEM THE SAME MERCY THEY INTENDED FOR ME.

THAT MAGNETIC FORCE FIELD WILL ENSURE, CYCLOPS, THAT YOU DO NOT INTERFERE.

A THOUSAND MILES AWAY, IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC, THE SOVIET "DELTA II CLASS FLEET BALLISTIC SUBMARINE, LENINGRAD, CRUISES AT FIRING DEPTH, ITS CREW AT BATTLE STATIONS.

SOME MEN ARE FRIGHTENED; EVERYONE WONDERS IF WORLD WAR III HAS BEGUN. IN ALL THEIR PATROLS, ALL THE COUNTLESS ALERTS AND DRILLS, THEY'VE NEVER FIRED AN ARMED MISSILE.

UNTIL TODAY.

THEY WILL NEVER FIRE ANOTHER.

<YOUR GOVERNMENT WAS WARNED NOT TO ATTACK ME, CAPTAIN.>

<IT IS UNFORTUNATE THAT YOU AND YOUR CREW MUST PAY THE PRICE FOR THEIR STUPIDITY.>

<CAPTAIN, THE ELECTRICAL PANELS ARE SHORT-CIRCUITING!>

<THE CONTROLS OF THE BALLAST TANKS ARE LOCKED *OPEN!* WE'RE LOSING AIR!>

<THE MANUAL SYSTEM IS DYSFUNCTIONAL AS WELL! CAPTAIN, WE ARE *SINKING!*>

<HOW DEEP IS THE BOTTOM BENEATH OUR KEEL?>

<SEVEN THOUSAND METERS, CAPTAIN.>

<WATER PRESSURE WILL IMPLODE THE HULL--AND *CRUSH* US-->

<--AT LESS THAN *ONE* THOUSAND METERS.>

AND, IN MOSCOW...

<COMRADE ADMIRAL, WE'VE LOST CONTACT WITH THE SUBMARINE, *LENINGRAD!*>

<BRING ALL FORCES TO FULL WAR ALERT. I WILL INFORM THE PREMIER.>

<YOU WILL DO NOTHING!>

<BEHOLD, HUMANS, THE MEREST **FRACTION** OF MAGNETO'S POWER!>

<A HOLO-GRAM--!>

<COMRADES, THE VIEWSCREEN--*LOOK!*>

THIS IS THE CITY OF **VARYKINO**, A NEWLY-EXPANDED INDUSTRIAL CENTER NESTLED IN A SIBERIAN RIVER VALLEY-- PART OF AN AMBITIOUS SOVIET PLAN TO DEVELOP THE RESOURCES OF THAT VAST, UNSPOILED WILDERNESS.

AS THE OFFICERS IN THE KREMLIN WAR ROOM AND THEIR CIVILIAN SUPERIORS WATCH IN HELPLESS HORROR...

... AS A FISSURE OPENS BENEATH VARYKINO'S CENTRAL SQUARE. MOLTEN MAGMA--THE LIFEBLOOD OF THE EARTH ITSELF--SPEWS INTO THE NIGHT...

...AND A **VOLCANO** IS BORN!

EARTHQUAKES SHATTER MULTI-STORY SKYSCRAPERS AND LAVA CONSUMES THE RUINS. FIRESTORMS OF UNIMAGINABLE FURY SWEEP ACROSS THE RIVER BASIN, TRANSFORMING IT INTO AN OPEN AIR BLAST FURNACE.

MAGNETO DELIBERATELY RETARDS THE VOLCANO'S GROWTH, ALLOWING TIME FOR A RUTHLESS, DESPERATE MASS EVACUATION OF THE CITY.

HIS MESSAGE IS IMPLICIT, AND GRIM: BUT FOR HIS BENEVOLENCE, THE ENTIRE POPULACE WOULD HAVE PERISHED IN THEIR BEDS.

MY NEXT TARGET, COMRADES, COULD WELL BE *MOSCOW!*

AND IF THERE *IS* A NEXT TIME, BE ASSURED THAT I WILL **NOT** BE SO MERCIFUL.

TAKE HEED, COMRADE PREMIER. YOU HOLD THE LIVES OF COUNT-LESS MILLIONS IN YOUR HANDS.

SUNSET...

I'M HUMAN. I'M NOTHING TO MAGNETO. HE'D KILL ME WITHOUT A SECOND THOUGHT. THE FACT THAT I PERSONALLY HAVE NOT *DONE* ANYTHING TO HARM HIM--OR ANY MUTANT--DOESN'T MATTER.

I'VE NEVER BEEN... HATED LIKE THAT.

LEE?

YOU'VE BEEN OUT HERE A LONG TIME.

I'VE BEEN THINKING.

AM I INTRUDING? I'LL LEAVE IF YOU WANT.

NO.

WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN--TO THE WORLD? TO... US?

I DON'T KNOW.

MAGNETO BELIEVES HE HOLDS ALL THE CARDS.

WHO KNOWS? PERHAPS THIS TIME, HE DOES.

BUT YOU INTEND TO FIGHT HIM ANYWAY.

I HAVE TO, LEE.

MAGNETO'S WAY IS WRONG. THE PEACE HE OFFERS IS ILLUSORY. HIS GOLDEN AGE WILL LAST UNTIL HE DIES, IF THAT LONG. AND IT'LL END AS IT BEGAN--IN BLOOD.

I WISH YOU WEREN'T INVOLVED. I WISH YOU WERE SOMEWHERE SAFE.

THERE IS ***NOWHERE*** SAFE. BUT IF I'M TO... DIE...

...I'D RATHER DO IT WITH SOMEONE I CARE FOR.

UNNOTICED, AS THEIR EMBRACE BECOMES A KISS...

...A JET, SOARING HIGH ABOVE THE ISLAND, IS ENVELOPED IN A CORONA OF BLINDING MAGNETIC ENERGY.

NEITHER SCOTT NOR LEE LOOK UP.

NEITHER SEE IT BEGIN TO FALL.

THE AIRCRAFT IS A SPECIALLY MODIFIED VERSION OF THE SR-71 BLACKBIRD, THE MOST ADVANCED PLANE IN THE WORLD.

IT BELONGS TO THE X-MEN.

NIGHTCRAWLER, WHAT'S HAPPENING?! WHAT HIT US?!

I WISH I KNEW, STORM. OUR ENTIRE ELECTRICAL SYSTEM SHORT-CIRCUITED AND EXPLODED! SOMEONE DO SOMETHING ABOUT THOSE FIRES AFT!

THE CONTROLS ARE *FROZEN!*

WE'RE LOCKED INTO A FULL POWER DIVE! I CAN'T PULL US OUT!!

WHAT THE FLAMIN'--?!!

WOLVERINE!

STORM! HE WAS GETTING A SANDWICH FROM THE SUPPLY LOCKER! HE ISN'T STRAPPED IN!

GRAB HIM, COLOSSUS!

YOW!

I AM TRYING TO, KITTY. BUT THE *BLACKBIRD'S* VIOLENT MOVEMENTS KEEP PULLING HIM FROM MY GRASP!

LOOK OUT! I'M BEIN' TOSSED FORWARD!

KRAK

UNNGNH!

STORM!!

WOLVERINE'S SKELETON IS LACED WITH *ADAMANTIUM.*

HIS UNBREAKABLE SKULL MUST HAVE HIT HER LIKE A STEEL BAR. SHE'S *UNCONSCIOUS!*

I WAS COUNTING ON STORM USING HER ELEMENTAL POWERS TO GENERATE A WIND CAPABLE OF PUSHING US BACK TO LEVEL FLIGHT.

WITHOUT HER, WE HAVEN'T A CHANCE!

COLOSSUS TRIES TO BUDGE THE CONTROLS WITH ALL THE AWESOME STRENGTH OF HIS ORGANIC STEEL ARMORED FORM.

HE MERELY BENDS THE YOKE OUT OF SHAPE.

STORM, WAKE UP, PLEASE. I DON'T WANT THE OTHERS TO KNOW...

... BUT I'M SCARED! I... DON'T WANT TO DIE.

WAKE UP! YOU'RE OUR ONLY HOPE!

PLEASE, ORORO. THERE'S SO LITTLE TIME!

Uhmmnnn-- OWW! MY-- HEAD!

STORM!

DON'T SHOUT, KITTEN, I BEG YOU.

BUT THE PLANE'S CRASHING!

WHAT--?!

GODDESS!

IGNORING THE SHARDS OF PAIN JABBING MERCILESSLY THROUGH HER HEAD...

...STORM SUMMONS A JETSTREAM TO SHOVE THE STRICKEN AIRCRAFT OUT OF ITS DIVE AND BEGIN TO SLOW IT DOWN.

BUT THE BLACKBIRD HAS LOST TOO MUCH ALTITUDE. IT'S MOVING TOO FAST AND STORM'S REACTIONS ARE TOO SLOW, HER CONCENTRATION A SPOTTY FRACTION OF WHAT IT SHOULD BE.

DESPITE HER BEST EFFORTS, THEY TUMBLE HEADLONG INTO THE OCEAN AT BETTER THAN 200 KNOTS--THE IMPACT MUCH AKIN TO SLAMMING FULL-TILT INTO A BRICK WALL.

THE BLACKBIRD BOUNCES ONCE BEFORE IT SINKS...

...WITHOUT A TRACE.

THE X-MEN'S ABRUPT DISAPPEARANCE DOES NOT GO UNNOTICED, FOR, SOMEWHERE OVER THE HORIZON...

PETER! I'VE LOST TELEPATHIC CONTACT WITH THE X-MEN! THEY'VE VANISHED!

DEJAH THORIS II
COCOA BEACH

THE SPEAKER IS CHARLES XAVIER, WORLD-REKNOWNED GENETICIST, AND FOUNDER/MENTOR OF THAT TEAM OF MUTANT SUPER HEROES.

HE IS HERE SEARCHING FOR SCOTT SUMMERS-- ORORO'S PREDECESSOR AS TEAM LEADER--MISSING SINCE A RECENT FREAK STORM AT SEA.

THE MAN BEING ADDRESSED IS **PETER CORBEAU**, ASTRONAUT, PHYSICIST, ENGINEER--CREATOR OF THE STARCORE MANNED ORBITAL SOLAR LABORATORY--AND, MOST IMPORTANTLY, FRIEND.

THE BLACK-BIRD'S OFF THE RADAR, TOO.

AND I CAN'T RAISE THEM ON THE RADIO.

ALSO PRESENT ARE **MOIRA MacTAGGERT** --THE WOMAN XAVIER ONCE LOVED, NOW HIS COLLEAGUE IN MUTANT RESEARCH--

--AND EX-AVENGER, **CAROL DANVERS.***

TROUBLE, CHARLES?

POSSIBLY, MOIRA.

*FOR MORE INFO ON THE FORMER MS. MARVEL, SEE AVENGERS ANNUAL #10, ON SALE SOON-- LOUISE.

THEY WERE OVERFLYING JULIENNE CAY-- *hmmmm*. GIVEN THE RIGHT WINDS, THE RIGHT CURRENTS AND A LOT OF LUCK, SCOTT AND CAPTAIN FORRESTER COULD HAVE BEEN SWEPT IN THAT DIRECTION.

WOULDN'T THE COAST GUARD ALREADY HAVE SEARCHED THERE?

NOT NECESSARILY. TWO SCORE SHIPS WERE LOST THE NIGHT THEY WERE SWEPT OVERBOARD. IT'S A MIRACLE THEIR TRAWLER, *ARCADIA*, MADE IT BACK TO PORT AT ALL.

WE HAD FREAK SQUALLS, SEA QUAKES, ISLANDS BEING RAISED, OR SUNK. A SUBSTANTIAL CHUNK OF THE EARTH'S CRUST LITERALLY REARRANGED ITSELF THAT NIGHT. WE'RE STILL PICKING UP THE PIECES.

BUT EVEN IN THE BEST OF TIMES, PEOPLE GIVE THIS NEIGHBORHOOD A PRETTY WIDE BERTH. Y'SEE, JULIENNE CAY'S LOCATED IN THE HEART OF THE ***BERMUDA TRIANGLE***.

DT²

EVEN AS THE HYDROFOIL YACHT, DEJAH THORIS II, RACES TO THE X-MEN'S AID, THE BLACKBIRD GENTLY COMES TO REST ON A CORAL REEF.

THERE'S AN OLD SAYING, *MEINE FREUNDE*, THAT ANY LANDING YOU CAN WALK AWAY FROM HAS TO BE A ***GOOD*** ONE.

PERHAPS, KURT. BUT EVEN YOU MUST ADMIT THAT A LANDING THAT TAKES PLACE...

...IN A HUNDRED FEET OF WATER...

...LEAVES SOMETHING TO BE DESIRED.

I SPOTTED AN ISLAND WHEN WE HIT, 'RORO.

CAN'T BE MORE'N A COUPLE'A MILES AWAY.

EXCELLENT. FOLLOW WOLVERINE, EVERYONE, AND STAY CLOSE.

ONE OF OUR TWO SURVIVAL KITS WAS DESTROYED IN THE CRASH...

...LEAVING US WITH ONLY FOUR AIRPACKS. FORTUNATELY, IN MY ARMORED FORM...

...I DO NOT NEED TO BREATHE. MY ONLY WORRY UNDERWATER IS RUST.

BY THE WHITE WOLF!

I- I'M TURNING ***HUMAN!***

BUT HOW?! I CANNOT TRANSFORM BACK TO ARMOR-- WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO ME?!?

WATER--FILLING LUNGS-- I AM ***DROWNING!*** OTHERS... TOO FAR AHEAD! CANNOT SPEAK-- CALL ON... RADIO. THEY CANNOT SEE... DO NOT REALIZE...

ORORO... SISTER... HELP ME--!

KITTY--MY... KATERINA... I... I... I...*

MOONRISE...

I ENVY SCOTT'S ABILITY TO SLEEP. I WISH I COULD. BUT, AS AN X-MAN, HE'S PROBABLY USED TO NIGHTMARES LIKE THIS. THE WORLD IS DANCING BLINDFOLDED ALONG THE EDGE OF THE ABYSS. THE SLIGHTEST MIS-STEP COULD TOPPLE IT OVER.

I'VE NEVER FELT SO FRIGHTENED. OR SO COMPLETELY... ALONE.

I'M GLAD HE TOLD ME ABOUT THE X-MEN.

IT EXPLAINS A LOT--ABOUT HIM, AND THE FORCE BEAMS HE FIRES FROM HIS EYES. HE LOVES HIS TEAM-MATES VERY MUCH--AND... CARES FOR ME, BELIEVES IN ME, ENOUGH TO TRUST ME WITH THEIR SECRET.

HE'S A GOOD MAN. DAD WOULD HAVE LIKED HIM.

I CAN'T-- I WON'T--LET HIM FIGHT MAGNETO ALONE.

WHAT'S THAT--?!

SOMETHING MOVED ON THE WHARF, I'M SURE OF IT.

I SHOULD HAVE WOKEN SCOTT. IT'S CRAZY COMING DOWN HERE IN THE DARK, BY MYSELF. BUT I'M FEELING A LITTLE CRAZY.

I'M THE BEST SKIPPER ON THE COAST, A WOMAN WHO'S HELD HER OWN IN ANY SCRAP, PULLED HER WEIGHT IN ANY SEA.

AND I'M *HOMO SAPIENS*, A HUMAN BEING! I'M AS CAPABLE OF FIGHTING FOR MYSELF--AND MY WORLD-- AS ANY X-MAN.

I MUST HAVE BEEN IMAGINING THINGS-- *HEY!!*

I SURE HOPE YOU CAN SWIM, SWEETHEART--

--'CAUSE I'M IN NO MOOD TA PLAY LIFEGUARD.

WHO-- WHAT-- ARE YOU?! WHY--?!
SHADDUP!
NOT A WORD, NOT A SOUND, OR YOU'RE DEAD--UNDERSTAND?!
HE MEANS THAT.
HYII--! HE WASN'T ALONE!
WE HAVE HIM, WOLVERINE! BUT I FEAR HE IS IN A BAD WAY!
STORM, LOOK! COMPANY.
"WOLVERINE?" "STORM?" THOSE ARE THE NAMES SCOTT TOLD ME!
COAST IS CLEAR. OUTSIDE OF THE GIRL I DUNKED, I CAN'T READ ANY SOLID SCENTS. THIS ISLAND MUST BE PRETTY MUCH DESERTED.
ARE-- ARE YOU PEOPLE... THE *X-MEN?*
I'M *LEE FORRESTER*, A... FRIEND OF SCOTT SUMMERS'!
HOW'S THAT FOR LUCK. WE'VE BEEN SEARCHING ALL OVER FOR YOU TWO.
UPSY-DAISY, PETER.
HE'S NOT MOVING, ORORO. IS HE ALL RIGHT?!
I DO NOT KNOW, KITTEN.
WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM?! WHY DID HE TURN HUMAN?!?
BEATS ME, KID.
THE *BLACK-BIRD* WAS ATTACKED. PERHAPS HE WAS AMBUSHED AS WELL.
BUT WHY COLOSSUS-- AND NOT THE REST OF US?
NEVER MIND THAT NOW. IT'S NOT IMPORTANT. WE'VE GOT TO SAVE HIM, IF... IF WE CAN. I HAD RED CROSS TRAINING AT CAMP. I'LL TRY MOUTH-TO-MOUTH RESUSCITATION.
GET TO WORK, KID. I'LL CHECK FOR LIFE SIGNS.

SECONDS PASS, THE ONLY SOUND THAT OF KITTY PRYDE GULPING AIR INTO HER OWN LUNGS, BEFORE GIVING PETER RASPUTIN THE "KISS OF LIFE" AND FORCING THAT AIR INTO HIS...

I GET NO HEARTBEAT! I'LL START CPR!*

*CARDIO-PULMONARY RESUSCITATION --LOUISE.

DOES HE HAVE A CHANCE?

I'M NO DOCTOR, ELF. HOW THE BLAZES WOULD I KNOW? WE JUST HAVETA KEEP TRYIN' TILL THE BIG LUG REVIVES...

...OR 'TIL WE DROP.

THEN, SUDDENLY, MIRACULOUSLY...

KOFF! KOFF!

K-KOFF-- KITTY?! AM I... DEAD?

YA GAVE IT THE OLD COLLEGE TRY, PETEY, BUT YA BLEW IT.

YOU'RE STILL ALIVE.

THANK HEAVEN! I--I MEAN, WE-- ALL THOUGHT WE'D LOST YOU, PETER.

Hmnh?!

A SCENT!

I GUESS I WAS SO WRAPPED UP IN SAVIN' COLOSSUS THAT I DIDN'T NOTICE IT BEFORE. IT'S REAL FAINT. THE BREEZE IS PUSHIN' IT AWAY FROM ME. I CAN'T QUITE GET A HANDLE ON IT.

I THINK IT'S A... GUY. HE KNOWS HOW TO MOVE, TOO, AN' USE COVER. I CAN'T SEE OR HEAR HIM.

SOMETHIN' ABOUT THIS SCENT FEELS AWFULLY FLAMIN' FAMILIAR. WHY CAN'T I PLACE IT?!

LOOKING FOR ME, SHORT-STUFF?

HUH!?!

FREEZE, SUCKER! OR I'LL--!

WHOA, WOLVERINE--RELAX! SHEATHE YOUR CLAWS! I'M A FRIEND! OR HAVE YOU SO SOON FORGOTTEN...

SNIKT!

CYCLOPS!

THE ONE AND ONLY.

LOST YOUR TOUCH, LOGAN? YOU WALKED RIGHT BY ME AND NEVER EVEN NOTICED.

YOU WERE LUCKY, BUB.

BUT I GOTTA ADMIT, MY SENSES *DO* SEEM A LOT *DULLER* THAN NORMAL.

SCOTT! THE GODDESS BE PRAISED! WE THOUGHT YOU DEAD!

IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU, TOO, ORORO.

SCOTT, YOU AREN'T WEARING YOUR SPECIAL *RUBY QUARTZ GLASSES!* WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR *OPTIC BLASTS?!*

THE SAME THING THAT'S HAPPENED TO WOLVERINE'S SENSES AND, I'LL WAGER, TO COLOSSUS.

UNDERWATER, *TOVARISCH*, AS I NEARED THIS ISLAND, I TRANSMUTED FROM MY ARMORED FORM TO FLESH-AND-BLOOD. I COULD NOT STOP THE CHANGE, OR REVERSE IT.

THIS IS *MAGNETO'S* DOING. WE'RE ON *HIS* ISLAND. SOMETHING HERE PROJECTS AN ENERGY FIELD THAT EFFECTIVELY NEUTRALIZES OUR MUTANT ABILITIES.

HE'S BLACKMAILING THE WORLD. IF HE ISN'T GIVEN TOTAL POLITICAL CONTROL, HE'LL "END LIFE ON EARTH" AS WE KNOW IT.

WE HAVE TO STOP HIM.

WITHOUT OUR POWERS?!

PRECISELY. WE ALL POSSESS SKILLS THAT HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH BEING MUTANTS. I'M A STRATEGIST, STORM WAS A THIEF, NIGHTCRAWLER AN ACROBAT. WOLVERINE HAS HIS CLAWS, COLOSSUS HIS NATURAL STRENGTH, KITTY HER INTELLIGENCE.

MAGNETO DOESN'T EVEN KNOW YOU'RE HERE--AND EVEN IF HE DID, HE'D BELIEVE US ALL TO BE HELPLESS. HE'S IN FOR A VERY BIG *SURPRISE.*

SOON...

I DUNNO, MAN. WE'VE NEVER BEATEN MAGNETO *WITH* OUR POWERS. AN' ON TOP OF EV'RYTHING, YOU SPLIT THE TEAM!

I EXPLAINED MY REASONS, WOLVERINE. THE WOMEN'S TALENTS WON'T BE OF MUCH USE TO US.

AND OUR GOAL ISN'T TO BEAT MAGNETO HIMSELF, IT'S TO DEFEAT HIS *PLAN*. HE'S CREATED A DEVICE CAPABLE OF MANIPULATING THE EARTH'S CRUST. HE FIELD-TESTED IT BY RAISING THIS ISLAND FROM THE SEA BOTTOM.

ONCE THAT DEVICE IS DESTROYED, HIS HOLD OVER THE WORLD WILL BE GONE. THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS WILL BE FREE TO DEFEND THEMSELVES.

HE GAVE LEE AND ME A TOUR OF HIS COMPLEX. HE'S REALLY PROUD OF WHAT HE'S DONE. THE DEVICE ITSELF IS ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THIS DOOR. THE ENTRANCE IS LACED WITH ALARMS AND BOOBY-TRAPS, WHICH IS WHY WE WON'T USE IT.

THE X-MEN FOLLOW CYCLOPS A FEW METERS DOWN AN ADJACENT PASSAGE, WHERE...

YOU WANT ME TO CUT THROUGH THIS WALL? CYKE, OLD SON...

...IT'LL BE A PIECE OF CAKE!

SNIKT!

*THE CLAW-- ONE OF A SET OF SIX EXTENDED BY MENTAL COMMAND FROM THE BACK OF WOLVERINE'S HANDS-- IS FORGED OF **ADAMANTIUM**, THE STRONGEST METAL KNOWN. HONED TO RAZOR-**KEENNESS**, IT CAN SLICE THROUGH ANYTHING...*

...AS WOLVERINE QUICKLY DEMONSTRATES.

AND WHEN HE'S DONE...

WATCH YOUR STEP, PEOPLE. THIS SHAFT IS AS DEEP AS IT LOOKS. AND, CLICHÉ AS IT SOUNDS, THE FIRST STEP IS A REAL LULU.

UNGLAUBLICH! PHANTASTISCH!

MEANWHILE, IN THE TOWERING CENTRAL CITADEL WHICH DOMINATES THE ISLAND...

...AND WHICH MAGNETO HAS APPROPRIATED FOR HIS OWN PERSONAL USE...

...STORM IS HARD AT WORK WITH A SET OF SOPHISTICATED LOCKPICKS PULLED FROM THEIR SECRET COMPARTMENTS IN HER HEAD-DRESS.

GEE, STORM. YOU'RE REAL GOOD AT THIS.

IN MY DAY, KITTEN, I WAS THE BEST THIEF--AND BEGGAR-GIRL--IN CAIRO.

SUPPOSE, WHEN YOU FINALLY OPEN THE DOOR, MAGNETO IS STANDING ON THE OTHER SIDE.

WHAT DO WE DO THEN?

WE SHALL SMILE SWEETLY, CAPTAIN FORRESTER, AND PRAY HE IS IN A PLEASANT MOOD.

CALL ME "LEE", OKAY, STORM?

I -- I DON'T MEAN TO SNAP. I'M SCARED.

WE ARE ALL SCARED, LEE.

AH!

IT'S NICE TO SEE THAT *I* HAVEN'T LOST MY TOUCH.

WHAT ARE WE LOOKING FOR?

COMPUTERS!

IN A SET-UP AS BIG AND COMPLICATED AS THIS, MAGNETO CAN'T AFFORD TO TRUST THE CONTROL CODES TO MEMORY. IT'S AN UNNECESSARY RISK. HE'LL PROBABLY HAVE EVERYTHING WRITTEN DOWN IN A PROGRAMMING BOOK.

STORM, I FOUND IT!

IT'S IN THE OPEN--AND, LOOK! THIS COFFEE'S STILL WARM! HE MUST HAVE BEEN WORKING HERE NOT LONG AGO.

I'LL SCOUT FOR HIM, KITTEN. CAN YOU DECIPHER THE BOOK?

RATS!

IT'S WRITTEN IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE. AND PROBABLY IN CODE, TOO.

I'M SORRY, ORORO. I CAN'T UNDERSTAND A WORD!

KITTY HAD SUCH HIGH HOPES. SHE THOUGHT ALL SHE HAD TO DO WAS FIND THAT BOOK, THROW THE PROPER SWITCH, AND WE'D BE BACK IN BUSINESS.

POOR DEAR. I, TOO, WISH LIFE WOULD BE THAT SIMPLE, BUT I'VE YET TO SEE IT HAPPEN.

Hmmm-- THERE'S AN UPPER LEVEL TO THIS SUITE...

... A SECOND LOCKED DOOR. DOES IT PROTECT ANOTHER LABORATORY...

...OR SOMETHING ELSE?

MAGNETO!

HE'S FAST ASLEEP. HOW IRONICALLY... HUMAN.

HE LOOKS SO VULNERABLE, AND STRANGELY AT PEACE. I HAVE NEVER SEEN HIM LIKE THIS. WHY ARE WE ENEMIES?! THERE IS MUCH TO RESPECT ABOUT HIM--ALMOST TO ADMIRE. WHAT A SHAME. WHAT A TRAGIC WASTE.

I COULD EASILY KILL HIM. I SHOULD. WOLVERINE WOULD, WITHOUT HESITATION.

AS SILENT AS THE WIND--AS SILENT AS DEATH ITSELF--STORM APPROACHES THE BED, WHILE, IN ANOTHER PART OF THE ISLAND...

HAVE YOU PUZZLED OUT THESE CONTROLS, NIGHT-CRAWLER?

JA, CYCLOPS, BUT I'M AFRAID I HAVE BAD NEWS. MAGNETO'S SECRET WEAPON CANNOT BE SHUT DOWN.

ALL RIGHT, THEN, SINCE WE CAN'T TURN IT OFF...

...LET'S *WRECK* IT!

WE'LL HAVE TO CUT THE CENTRAL VERTICAL MEMBERS, IN ADDITION TO THE HORIZONTALS. NIGHTCRAWLER, CAN YOU AND WOLVERINE MAKE IT OUT THERE?

THAT METAL IS PROBABLY SLIPPERY AS THE DEVIL--AND THERE ARE NO HAND OR FOOT HOLDS.

BUT IT'S WORTH A TRY.

BY THE WAY, WOLVERINE, ARE YOU PRONE TO *VERTIGO*?

I'M PRONE TA *SURVIVAL*, BUB. I'LL MANAGE.

'COURSE, IF I **DO** FALL, I'LL MAKE SURE THAT THE FIRST THING I GRAB IS YOUR TAIL.

PROMISES, PROMISES.

SO FAR, SO GOOD. TOO GOOD. THIS CAPER'S MOVIN' SO SMOOTHLY, I'M STARTIN' TA GET ANTSY. I KEEP EXPECTIN' MAGNETO TA BLAST US ANY SECOND.

I, ALSO. REMEMBER, YOU'RE ONLY TO WEAKEN THESE BEAMS. GRAVITY AND THE DEVICE'S OWN WEIGHT SHOULD DO THE REST.

AND ONCE YOU BEGIN CUTTING, WE MUST MOVE AT TOP SPEED. OUR ATTACK WILL PROBABLY TRIGGER EVERY ALARM IN THE PLACE.

THIS FAST ENOUGH FOR YA?

ACTUALLY, I'M SURPRISED WE AIN'T ENCOUNTERED MORE AUTOMATIC SECURITY SYSTEMS. IT AIN'T LIKE MAGGY TO LEAVE HIS TOYS SO UNDEFENDED.

PERHAPS HE HADN'T HAD THE TIME OR OPPORTUNITY TO INSTALL ANY.

CARELESS. HIS LOSS, OUR GAIN.

THAT'S THE LAST ONE. SHOOT, THE VERTICALS MUST HAVE BEEN MORE IMPORTANT THAN CYKE FIGURED!

WE GOT TROUBLE, ELF! THE INTERNAL VIBRATIONS GENERATED BY THE POWER BEAM ARE SHAKIN' THE ENTIRE STRUCTURE LIKE A RUNAWAY MIXMASTER.

HOW DO YOU PROPOSE WE GET OFF THIS MOTHER?!

WITH ALL DELIBERATE--

--WOLVERINE!

CRIPES! ONE'A THE FLAMIN' BEAMS SNAPPED AHEAD O' SCHEDULE!

I'M *FALLIN'!*

RELAX YOUR BODY, WOLVERINE -- GO LIMP!

HUH?! WHAT'RE YA DOIN'?!

WHAT COMES NATURALLY, OF COURSE.

YOU'RE CRAZY! YOU CAN'T TELEPORT US OUTTA HERE! HOW'RE YOU GONNA SAVE YOURSELF, MUCH LESS ME?!

THAP!

HOW QUICKLY SOME FORGET.

I WAS A ***SUPERB*** TRAPEZE ARTIST ***WITHOUT*** USING MY TAIL.

WHEN I USE IT, I'M *INCREDIBLE!*

COLOSSUS -- *CATCH!*

YYYOW!

DO NOT FEAR, *TOVARISCH*. I HAVE YOU.

FINE. YOU GOT ME. CYKE'S GOT YOU. WHO'S GOT ***KURT?!***

YOUR CONCERN IS TOUCHING, LOGAN, BUT UNNECESSARY -- THOUGH, IF SOME KIND SOUL WERE TO OFFER ME A HAND UP...

...I WOULD NOT REFUSE.

I -- *ahem* -- SEEM TO HAVE MISCALCULATED MY LAST LEAP SLIGHTLY.

THAT THING MADE A HECKUVA NOISE WHEN THE VERTICALS SNAPPED. I'M SURPRISED NO ONE HEARD IT.

WHO KNOWS, WOLVERINE, PERHAPS MAGNETO STEPPED OUT FOR THE EVENING? OR THE ENTIRE WEEKEND?

OR HE COULD BE HERE ANY SECOND, NIGHTCRAWLER. WE HAVE TO DO AS MUCH DAMAGE IN AS LITTLE TIME AS POSSIBLE. WOLVERINE, START CUTTING THOSE HORIZONTAL BRACES.

MEANWHILE, IN MAGNETO'S TOWER SUITE...

FOR ALL HIS CRIMES, FOR ALL THE PAIN AND GRIEF HE HAS CAUSED, MAGNETO IS NOT, IN HIS HEART, AN EVIL MAN. GIVEN DIFFERENT CIRCUMSTANCES, HE COULD HAVE BEEN LIKE US--OR WE LIKE HIM.

YET LEE IS QUITE CORRECT. TO FULFILL HIS DREAMS, HE WOULD DESTROY US ALL WITHOUT HESITATION.

THE LONGER I-- WE-- REMAIN, THE GREATER BECOMES OUR RISK.

ON THAT PLATE-- A KNIFE.

WITH IT, I CAN ***END*** THE RISK, AND THE THREAT-- FOREVER.

IT IS A SHARP KNIFE.

IT COULD EASILY CUT HIS THROAT.

I KNOW HOW. I'VE DONE IT BEFORE.

ONCE. AS A CHILD. TO SAVE MY LIFE.

I DID IT THEN, WHY NOT NOW?

I SWORE AN OATH, NEVER TO KILL AGAIN.

BUT MAGNETO IS PREPARED TO SLAY THE ENTIRE ***WORLD!***

ACCORDING TO LEE, HE HAS *ALREADY* SLAIN. I MUST ACT. I MUST STRIKE!

GODDESS FORGIVE ME, I...

...CANNOT.

Hmnh?! SOMEONE IS IN THE ROOM!

IT'S *STORM*-- STANDING BESIDE MY BED-- HOLDING A *KNIFE!*

HE REACTS WITH THE SPEED OF THOUGHT...

...CREATING A WALL OF MAGNETIC FORCE THAT HURLS STORM ACROSS THE ROOM AND OUT THE WINDOW, A QUARTER-MILE ABOVE THE GROUND.

AT THE SAME TIME, THE METAL-MESH ARMORED FABRIC OF HIS COSTUME FLOWS THROUGH THE AIR LIKE MERCURY AS MAGNETO PULLS IT OFF ITS HANGER AND ONTO HIS BODY.

STORM ISN'T STUPID ENOUGH TO COME AFTER ME BY HERSELF. THE OTHER X-MEN MUST BE ON THE ISLAND, TOO. WILL THOSE INSUFFERABLE YOUTHS NEVER LEARN?

ORORO HAD A KNIFE. SHE COULDN'T DEFEND HERSELF WITH HER ELEMENTAL POWERS BECAUSE MY INHIBITOR FIELD HAS STRIPPED HER-- AS WELL AS HER MUTANT COMPANIONS--

--OF THEIR MUTANT ABILITIES!

NOT QUITE, MAGNETO!

SOME OF US STILL POSSESS...

MY-- MIND!!

...THE POWER TO STOP YOU!

XAVIER!

I'M FACING AN *ASTRAL IMAGE* OF MY OLD ENEMY. HE'S... TRYING TO OVERWHELM ME... WITH A TELEPATHIC ATTACK.

CHARLES XAVIER IS THE STRONGEST MUTANT MIND ON EARTH. BUT ALTHOUGH MAGNETO HAS NO PSIONIC TALENTS, HIS WILL IS SECOND TO NONE--AND HE, LIKE XAVIER, IS FIGHTING FOR A CAUSE HE FERVENTLY BELIEVES IN, A GOAL HE WILL PAY ANY PRICE TO ACHIEVE.

THEY BATTLE WITH ALL THE STRENGTH AND SKILL AT THEIR COMMAND, NEITHER YIELDING IN THE SLIGHTEST...

...WHILE, ABOARD THE DEJAH THORIS II, CIRCLING MAGNETO'S ISLAND BEYOND THE RANGE OF HIS INHIBITOR FIELD...

THERE ARE WEIRD LIGHTS ALL AROUND THE CENTRAL TOWER.

AS... EXPECTED, MAGNETO IS PUTTING UP... CONSIDERABLE RESISTANCE...

...BUT I BELIEVE... HE IS... WEAKENING...

ALL EYES ARE ON THE ISLAND-- WHICH IS WHY NO ONE NOTICES THE BOLTS FASTENING XAVIER'S CHAIR TO THE DECK SILENTLY UNSCREW THEMSELVES...

...UNTIL, WITHOUT WARNING...

EH--?!

THE SAFETY HARNESS-- FASTENING AROUND ME!

SHEER SURPRISE MOMENTARILY SHATTERS XAVIER'S CONCENTRATION, ALLOWING MAGNETO TO MAKE HIS NEXT MOVE WITHOUT SIGNIFICANT OPPOSITION.

CHARLES!

MY CHAIR-- IT'S FLYING!

PETER, WE'VE GOT TO HELP HIM!

BUT, BEFORE ANYTHING CAN BE DONE, EVERY PIECE OF ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT ABOARD THE YACHT SUDDENLY SHORT-CIRCUITS...

...SHOCKING ALL ABOARD INTO SWIFT, BRUTAL UNCONSCIOUSNESS.

UNAWARE OF THIS OMINOUS DEVELOPMENT...

THIS IS THE FINAL BRACE, WOLVERINE.

DON'T I KNOW IT. A COUPLE'A MORE SWIPES WITH MY CLAWS SHOULD CUT IT LOOSE.

WHOOPS!

ON THE OTHER HAND--!

CYCLOPS, NIGHTCRAWLER-- *ANCHOR ME!* OR WE WILL BOTH FALL!

I HAVE YOU, MY FRIEND.

MUCH OBLIGED, PETEY.

THAT FRAMMISTAT IS SURE RAISIN' A RUCKUS. I WONDER IF WE'LL HEAR IT HIT BOTTOM.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE THERE WAITING FOR IT WHEN IT LANDS, WOLVERINE, I'M SURE IT CAN BE ARRANGED.

I HAD A FEELIN' THIS CAPER WAS GOIN' TOO GOOD TA BE TRUE.

YOU CAN DO WHAT YOU LIKE TO *US*, MAGNETO, BUT AT LEAST YOU'LL DESTROY NO MORE CITIES, ENDANGER NO MORE INNOCENT LIVES.

WE'VE *BEATEN* YOU!

PERHAPS, CYCLOPS.

I COMMEND YOU ALL FOR YOUR INGENUITY, YOUR ABILITY, YOUR COURAGE. ONCE MORE, THE X-MEN HAVE PROVEN THEMSELVES THE ***WORTHIEST*** OF FOES.

REGRETTABLY, THOUGH YOU MADE A VALIANT EFFORT...

...IT WAS A *WASTED* ONE.

BEHOLD!

ENERGY FLARES STAR-BRIGHT AROUND THE MASTER OF MAGNETISM...

...STREAMERS OF FORCE REACHING DOWN THE PIT TO GATHER UP ALL THE PIECES OF MAGNETO'S INFERNAL MACHINE...

... AND FIT THEM BACK TOGETHER AGAIN, AS GOOD AS NEW.

AND TO FORESTALL ANY THOUGHTS OF ESCAPE...

THE METAL WALLS-- IMPRISONING US!

THERE IS A WAY TO DEFEAT ME, CYCLOPS-- BUT SMASHING THIS MECHANISM IS NOT IT.

WHERE IS STORM, BUTCHER?!

I HAVE SENT HER TO A... BETTER WORLD, COLOSSUS. AND IF YOU DO NOT MODERATE YOUR INSOLENT TONE, I WILL SEND YOU TO JOIN HER.

YOU... *KILLED* HER?!?

I DID, CHILD...

...THOUGH IT GAVE ME NO PLEASURE TO DO SO.

AT THAT MOMENT, HOWEVER, HIGH ABOVE THE ISLAND, THE X-MEN'S LEADER SLOWLY OPENS HER EYES AND SMILES.

AS I WAS THROWN OUT INTO SPACE...

...I MANAGED TO TWIST MY BODY IN MID-AIR AND SNAG THIS PROJECTION WITH MY CAPE. THE SHOCK WRENCHED MY BACK-- KNOCKED ME UNCONSCIOUS.

BUT I STOPPED MY FALL.

I HAVE TO CLIMB MY CLOAK TO THE PROJECTION, THEN UP THE WALL TO MAGNETO'S WINDOW.

IT WON'T BE EASY, AND NOW THAT MY CAPE'S UNFASTENED, I DAREN'T SLIP.

HAND OVER HAND, INCH BY AGONIZING INCH, STORM HAULS HERSELF UP HER IMPROVISED LINE. THE EFFORT SHE MAKES...

...IS AS TREMENDOUS AS THE COST DEMANDED OF HER.

Ahhnnnn-- I AM NOT USED TO THIS.

I FEEL... AS THOUGH SOMEONE HAS COATED MY ARMS AND SHOULDERS WITH MOLTEN STEEL. I WANT... TO SLEEP... FOR A THOUSAND YEARS...

BUT I... CANNOT I... WILL NOT!

NO SIGN OF MAGNETO. HE MUST HAVE GONE AFTER THE OTHERS. Ah, KITTY, WHAT HAS HE DONE TO YOU?

HOW CAN I HELP THEM? AND MYSELF?

KITTY SAID THIS COMPUTER WAS IMPORTANT. LET'S SEE WHAT HARM I CAN DO-- BY *SMASHING* IT!

MOST IMPRESSIVE. I HOPE THIS TURNS OUT TO BE MORE THAN AN EMPTY GESTURE.

KRAK

THESE EXPLOSIONS SHOULD DRAW MAGNETO UP HERE TO INVESTIGATE. WHILE HE'S OCCUPIED WITH THAT, I'LL FIND AND FREE THE X-MEN. AND, VOW OR NO VOW, IF HE'S HURT MY KITTEN-- IN ANY WAY-- I'LL--!

AHHGH! MY *EYES!* I'VE FELT THIS SENSATION-- MY BRAIN ON FIRE, FEELING LIKE IT'S BEING TWISTED INSIDE-OUT-- BEFORE, AFTER MY ESCAPE FROM KRAKOA, IN THE SECONDS RIGHT BEFORE MY *OPTIC BLASTS* WERE RESTORED.*

MY POWER MUST BE *COMING BACK!*

*GIANT-SIZE X-MEN #1 --LOUISE.

MAGNETO HASN'T REALIZED IT YET. OUTSIDE OF PROFESSOR X, I DON'T THINK ANYONE ELSE HAS, EITHER. I'LL HAVE ONE FREE SHOT AT MAGNETO. I CAN'T WASTE IT.

I LIKE YOUR ATTITUDE, MAGNETO-- KILL STORM, KILL US ALL! I SUPPOSE IT'S A CASE OF DESTROYING MUTANT-KIND IN ORDER TO SAVE IT.

I NO LONGER BEAR THE X-MEN ANY ILL WILL, CYCLOPS, BUT I WILL BROOK NO OPPOSITION.

THAT SHOT SHOULD BUY US A FEW SECONDS GRACE.

THIS ONE SHOULD SET ME FREE.

AND ONCE I'VE DONNED THE RUBY QUARTZ VISOR THE X-MEN CARRIED IN THEIR EMERGENCY PACK...

...I CAN FREE THEM AS WELL!

TOUGH LUCK, MISTER--

--BECAUSE OPPOSITION IS WHAT YOU'RE GOING TO GET!

TAKE CARE, MY FRIENDS! MAGNETO IS HURLING METAL SHRAPNEL AT US!

BAMF

WHILE COLOSSUS TRIES TO SHIELD THE X-MEN WITH HIS ARMORED BODY-- AND KITTY SIMPLY ALLOWS THE PROJECTILES TO PHASE HARMLESSLY THROUGH HER -- NIGHTCRAWLER ***VANISHES*** *IN A BURST OF FLAME...*

...TO REAPPEAR INSTANTANEOUSLY WHERE IT WILL DO THE MOST GOOD.

I'VE RUNG THE GENTLEMEN'S CHIMES, PETER--

--YOU BRING DOWN THE HOUSE!

KANG!

UNNHHH!

IT WILL BE A PLEASURE, TOVARISCH.

I CARE NOTHING FOR YOUR WORLD, MAGNETO, OR THE FUTURE YOU OFFER MUTANTKIND...

THOOM!

BAMF

...FOR IT WILL BE BUILT ON THE BODIES OF SLAUGHTERED INNOCENTS!

THAT, I WILL NOT ALLOW!

AND HOW DO YOU PROPOSE TO STOP ME, COLOSSUS?

A MAGNETIC FORCE FIELD! THE WALL PETEY COLLAPSED DIDN'T EVEN TOUCH HIM!

THEN WE'LL KEEP THROWING THINGS AT HIM UNTIL SOMETHING FINALLY DOES!

WE HAVE TO KEEP MAGNETO'S ATTENTION FOCUSED ON US, TO GIVE PROFESSOR XAVIER A CHANCE TO DECK HIM WITH A PSIONIC BOLT.

MAGNETO'S DEFENDING HIMSELF...

...BUT NOT STRIKING BACK. NIGHTCRAWLER'S ATTACK MUST HAVE SHAKEN HIM UP.

I WONDER IF KURT CAN TELEPORT INTO THAT FORCE FIELD?

SUDDENLY...

MAGNETO!!

YOU SHOULD HAVE MADE CERTAIN I WAS DEAD, VILLAIN. THAT OVERSIGHT WILL BE YOUR DOWNFALL.

PERHAPS, BUT YOUR LIGHTNING STRIKES WILL NOT DEFEAT ME, WEATHER-WITCH. THEY ONLY MAKE ME ***STRONGER*** AS I ABSORB THEIR ENERGY!

THEY ARE NOT THE ONLY WEAPONS AT MY DISPOSAL.

THOSE LIGHTNING BOLTS-- THAT VOICE-- MY FRIENDS...

...IT IS *STORM!*

AND THEY ARE *FAR* FROM THE MOST POWERFUL.

A TORNADO!

MY MAGNETIC POWERS ARE ANCHORING ME AGAINST THE CYCLONE'S PULL, BUT THE STRAIN IS INCREDIBLE. ALSO, THE WHIRLWIND IS CREATING A *VACUUM* AROUND ME.

IMPOSSIBLE TO BREATHE-- ONLY SECONDS LEFT TO ACT!

"COLOSSUS' METAL FORM MAKES HIM UNIQUELY VULNERABLE TO MY MANIPULATION.

WHAT!?!

"HE SHOULD PROVE THE PERFECT WEAPON."

STORM-- *BEWARE!*

WHAM

MAGNETO IS CONTROLLING MY EVERY MOVE. FOR ALL MY STRENGTH-- OF BODY AND WILL--I AM HELPLESS!

SOMEONE CATCH STORM! I FEAR I HAVE HURT HER!

YOU SHALL DO WORSE THAN THAT BEFORE I'M THROUGH.

WOLVERINE HAS STORM. SHE'S ALL RI-- *YIKES!*

PETER, TURN *HUMAN!* THAT'LL BREAK HIS HOLD ON YOU!

HE IS TRYING TO, CHILD, BUT HE CANNOT.

I HAVE BURIED TWO X-MEN. I WILL SEE NO MORE OF MY STUDENTS DIE. I MUST STRIKE WITH ALL MY POWER.

AHHRRR!!

XAVIER-- STRIKING WITH A *PSI-BOLT!* HE IS MY DEADLIEST FOE.

ONCE HE IS DEALT WITH, DEFEATING HIS STUDENTS WILL BE *CHILD'S PLAY.*

WANNA BET, BUCKET HEAD?!

WOLVERINE!

MANIAC! IF I MUST FIGHT, AT LEAST IT IS FOR A CAUSE! YOU DO IT FOR PLEASURE!

›UNNNGNH!‹

TOO LONG HAVE I PLANNED, X-MEN. TOO LONG HAS MUTANTKIND SUFFERED!

THIS TIME, MY VICTORY WILL NOT BE DENIED!

IT *WILL*, MAGNETO-- BECAUSE IT *MUST BE!*

IF WE ARE HATED AND FEARED, IT IS IN LARGE PART BECAUSE OF *YOU!*

THINGS ARE GETTING GRIM. WIN OR LOSE, THIS BATTLE MAY COST SOME OF US OUR LIVES. I WISH THERE WAS A WAY OF GETTING KITTY OUT OF HERE. SHE'S A CHILD. SHE SHOULDN'T HAVE TO FACE SUCH A RISK.

AND YET, CONSIDERING THE ODDS, CONSIDERING WHAT'S AT STAKE, I HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO USE HER.

MAGNETO HAS TO ALIGN HIS ENERGY PROJECTOR WITH INCREDIBLE PRECISION. THAT REQUIRES ABSOLUTELY ACCURATE COMPUTATIONS.

HIS COMPUTERS ARE THE KEY, SPRITE. FIND THEM, DESTROY THEM...

...AND HE'S OUT OF BUSINESS. CAN YOU DO IT?

I'M AN X-MAN, AREN'T I?

WITH A LAST LOOK TOWARDS STORM, KITTY PHASES THROUGH A WALL AND BEGINS HER SEARCH.

HOLD HIM, PETEY!

GIMME ONE DECENT SHOT AT THE SUCKER AN' THIS SCRAP'S OVER!

WOLVERINE--DON'T! IF WE KILL MAGNETO, WE PROVE OURSELVES NO BETTER THAN HE!

IF WE KILL HIM, ELF, WE WIN! WE LIVE! THE WORLD IS SAVED! THAT'S ENOUGH FOR ME!

THEY STRIKE FROM ALL SIDES. I SEEM UNABLE...TO DEFEND MYSELF--BUT WHY?! MY HEART-- POUNDING! I CAN-NOT... GET A DECENT...BREATH --OF COURSE!

THE X-MEN'S DIRECT ATTACK ON ME IS A DIVERSION!

THE REAL THREAT COMES FROM *STORM!*

IN THE ENCLOSED SPACE OF THIS CHAMBER, SHE HAS BEEN GRADUALLY REDUCING THE AIR PRESSURE, CREATING A PARTIAL VACUUM. SHE NO DOUBT HOPED THAT BY THE TIME I REALIZED WHAT WAS HAPPENING...

...I WOULD BE TOO WEAK TO COPE.

SHE MAY BE... RIGHT.

SURRENDER, MAGNETO. WE HAVE NO WISH TO HARM YOU.

I... BELIEVE YOU, STORM.

BUT I WILL *NEVER* SURRENDER!

MAGNIFICENT!

AS A BY-PRODUCT OF HER ELEMENTAL ASSAULT, STORM CREATED A HURRICANE ABOUT MY ISLAND.

IT TOOK ALL MY REMAINING STRENGTH, BUT BY WARPING MAGNETIC FIELDS WITHIN THE TEMPEST, I WAS ABLE TO DRAW DOWN LIGHTNING BOLTS FROM THE SKY, FILTERING THEM THROUGH STORM BEFORE ABSORBING THEIR AWESOME POWER!

I CAUGHT HER BY SURPRISE. SHE WAS UNABLE TO COMPENSATE FOR THE SUDDEN ENERGY SURGE. AS A RESULT, THE LIGHTNING THAT REJUVENATES ME-- IS *DESTROYING* HER!

DESPITE HERSELF, STORM SCREAMS--WHILE, IN WHAT'S LEFT OF MAGNETO'S TOWER LAB...

WHEN ORORO WRECKS SOMETHING, SHE DOESN'T FOOL AROUND. WOW!

THESE ARE CONTROL SYSTEMS, THOUGH.

THEY CAN BE REPLACED WITH RELATIVE EASE.

CYCLOPS SAID THAT *COMPUTERS* ARE THE KEY TO MAGNETO'S OPERATION...

...AND THE KEY ELEMENT OF ANY COMPUTER IS ITS *MEMORY BANK.*

MY *PHASING* ABILITY DISRUPTS ELECTROMAGNETIC FIELDS. SO IF I PHASE THROUGH MAGNETO'S SYSTEM, I SHOULD SCRAMBLE ALL THE DATA HE HAS STORED HERE. THAT SHOULD MESS THINGS UP A BIT.

STORM IS *FIGHTING* ME!

DESPITE THE UNENDURABLE PAIN, SHE STILL TRIES TO WREST CONTROL OF THE LIGHTNING FROM ME NEVER HAVE I SEEN SUCH COURAGE!

COLOSSUS-- GET BETWEEN STORM AND MAGNETO! USE YOUR ARMORED FORM TO BREAK THE CIRCUIT!

Mein gott-- SHE'S BURNING!

THOUGH HE CAN TELEPORT SOLO WITH EASE, DOING IT WITH ANOTHER ENTAILS CONSIDERABLE RISK. AT BEST, THE SPACESHIFT WILL LEAVE BOTH HIM AND HIS PASSENGER TERRIBLY WEAK-- RAVAGED PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY.

BAM F

AT WORST, IT WILL KILL.

YET, WITHOUT HESITATION, HE TELEPORTS STORM FROM THE CENTER OF THE ISLAND TO THE SEAFRONT.

STORM! ARE YOU--?!

I... LIVE, NIGHTCRAWLER-- THANKS TO YOU.

'TWAS NOTHING.

AS THE SAYING GOES: DAMSEL-SAVING ... IS MY SPECIALTY...

YOU ARE A FOOL, COLOSSUS, I CAN CRUSH YOUR STEEL BODY WITH A THOUGHT-- EH?!

I SENSE A DISRUPTION IN THE MATRIX PATTERNS OF MY LIBRARY COMPUTERS' MAGNETIC MEMORY CORES.

CURSE YOU, X-MEN! DO YOU HAVE ANY CONCEPTION OF WHAT YOU'RE DOING?!

YOU ARE DESTROYING THE WORK OF A LIFETIME--

--DATA THAT CAN NEVER BE REPLACED!

CYKE, HE'S GOIN' AFTER KITTY! WE GOTTA WARN HER!

YOW!!

THE WALL'S EXPLODING!

SOMETHING TELLS ME I'VE OVERSTAYED MY WELCOME.

FOOM!

HOW DARE YOU!?!

ORORO-- HELP ME!

SHE CANNOT SAVE YOU. NO ONE CAN SAVE YOU!

EVERYWHERE I TURN-- EVERY MOVE I MAKE--

--YOU X-MEN ARE ALWAYS THERE TO OPPOSE ME!

HE'S CRAZY! HE MEANS TO KILL ME!

WAIT! MAGNETO'S NEVER SEEN ME USE MY POWER!

KITTY LUNGES FOWARD, PLANNING TO ESCAPE HARMLESSLY THROUGH HIM, BUT HER PHASING DISRUPTS MAGNETO'S NATURAL ELECTRONIC FIELD, JOLTING HIM PAINFULLY...

...AND MAGNETO RUTHLESSLY RESPONDS, SENDING A LETHAL CHARGE OF ELECTRICITY THROUGH HER.

YEARRRGH!!

THEN HIS PAIN SUBSIDES, AND HIS SHOCK AT HIS BEHAVIOR WRENCHES HIM OUT OF THE BERSERKER RAGE THAT HAD POSSESSED HIM.

SHE--SHE IS A *CHILD!*

WHAT HAVE I DONE?!

WHY DID YOU RESIST? WHY DID YOU NOT UNDERSTAND?! MAGDA-- MY BELOVED WIFE -- DID NOT UNDERSTAND. WHEN SHE SAW ME USE MY POWERS, SHE RAN FROM ME IN TERROR. IT DID NOT MATTER THAT I WAS DEFENDING HER...

...THAT I WAS AVENGING OUR MURDERED DAUGHTER.

I SWORE THEN THAT I WOULD NOT REST 'TIL I HAD CREATED A WORLD WHERE MY KIND-- MUTANTS -- COULD LIVE FREE AND SAFE AND UNAFRAID. WHERE SUCH AS YOU, LITTLE ONE COULD BE HAPPY.

INSTEAD, I HAVE *SLAIN* YOU.

I REMEMBER MY OWN CHILDHOOD-- THE GAS CHAMBERS AS *AUSCHWITZ*, THE GUARDS JOKING AS THEY HERDED MY FAMILY TO THEIR DEATH. AS OUR LIVES WERE NOTHING TO THEM, SO *HUMAN* LIVES BECAME NOTHING TO ME.

MAGNETO!

GODDESS--*NO!*

IF YOU HAVE A DIETY, BUTCHER, PRAY TO IT!

AS A BOY, I BELIEVED. AS A BOY, I TURNED MY BACK ON GOD FOREVER.

KILL ME IF YOU WISH, WIND-RIDER. I WILL NOT STOP YOU.

IS THIS SOME SORT OF TRICK?

YES. ONLY IT HAS BEEN PLAYED ON ME. I BELIEVED SO MUCH IN MY DESTINY, IN MY OWN PERSONAL VISION, THAT I WAS PREPARED TO PAY ANY PRICE, MAKE ANY SACRIFICE TO ACHIEVE IT.

BUT I FORGOT THE INNOCENTS WHO WOULD SUFFER IN THE PROCESS. CAN YOU NOT APPRECIATE THE IRONY, ORORO?

IN MY ZEAL TO REMAKE THE WORLD, I HAVE BECOME MUCH LIKE THOSE I HAVE ALWAYS HATED AND DESPISED.

THE DREAM WAS GOOD, *IS* GOOD. ONLY THE DREAMER HAS BECOME CORRUPTED.

IT IS TOO LATE TO CHANGE, ORORO. I AM TOO OLD. I HAVE LIVED TOO LONG WITH MY HATRED.

SO BE IT, MAGNETO. THE CHOICE IS YOURS.

GIVE ME MY CHILD.

MIRACULOUSLY -- BECAUSE SHE WAS PHASING AT THE TIME -- KITTY SURVIVED MAGNETO'S ENERGY BLAST. THE OTHER X-MEN ARRIVED TO FIND HER REGAINING CONSCIOUSNESS IN STORM'S ARMS. OF MAGNETO, THERE WAS NO SIGN. PROFESSOR XAVIER SCOURED THE ISLAND TELEPATHICALLY, TO NO AVAIL. THEIR ARCH-FOE HAD ESCAPED.

STRANGELY, THOUGH THE X-MEN WERE AT FIRST DESPONDENT OVER THAT, XAVIER DID NOT SEEM TO MIND.

AFTER DINNER, NIGHTCRAWLER, CAROL AND I WILL FINISH REPAIRING THE DAMAGE MAGNETO DID TO THE YACHT.

WE SHOULD BE READY TO SAIL BY SUNRISE.

A NIGHT ON A DESERT ISLAND -- *ach*, HOW ROMANTIC.

FROM THE WAY SCOTT AN' HIS NEW LADY FRIEND ARE ACTIN', ELF, I THINK THEY AGREE WITH YOU. MARSHMALLOW ANYONE?

THE X-MEN BELIEVE TODAY'S BATTLE WAS A DRAW, MORIA. THEY ARE WRONG. THEY ACHIEVED A GREAT, SEMINAL VICTORY, NOT BY PHYSICALLY DEFEATING MAGNETO -- WHICH WE HAVE DONE SO OFTEN IN THE PAST AND WHICH HAS RESOLVED ABSOLUTELY NOTHING --

-- BUT BY CHANGING MAGNETO'S PERCEPTIONS OF WHO AND WHAT HE IS. HE FLED, BECAUSE HE CAME FACE TO FACE WITH HIMSELF, AND COULD NOT STAND THE SIGHT.

"HE HAS WASTED SO MUCH OF HIS LIFE. PERHAPS HERE, THAT WILL END, AND HE WILL EMERGE FROM THIS CRUCIBLE THE GOOD MAN HE ONCE WAS AND MAY YET BE AGAIN."

SEE ANYTHING INTERESTING, KITTEN?

I'M TRYING TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO SALVAGE THE *BLACKBIRD.*

I KNOW! I'LL USE THE "FORCE," JUST LIKE LUKE SKYWALKER DID!

THAT WAS IN THE CINEMA, *Katzchen*, NOT REAL LIFE. THEY USE SPECIAL EFFECTS.

OH, YEAH?! WELL, I HAPPEN TO HAVE A FEW "SPECIAL EFFECTS" OF MY OWN. WATCH!

LOOK--THE PLANE!

Unglaublich!

KITTEN, ARE YOU REALLY DOING THIS?

SHUSH! I'M CONCENTRATING!

NO ONE TOLD ME YOU HAD TELEKINETIC POWERS, KITTY.

IT'S NEWS TO US, TOO, BUB.

I DON'T SEE WHY YOU GUYS ARE SO FREAKED OUT. THIS IS EASY.

"THERE YOU ARE, PROFESSOR. ONE X-PLANE, SLIGHTLY DAMP.

"ONCE DR. CORBEAU'S BOAT IS FIXED...

"...WE CAN DO THE SAME FOR THE **BLACKBIRD**--AND THEN FLY HOME."

Hmnh?!? WHAT ARE YOU ALL STARING AT?!

KITTY THOUGHT IT WOULD BE A GOOD IDEA FOR ME TO FETCH OUR AIRCRAFT.

SO-- HERE IT IS.

COLOSSUS!

"... FAMOUS LAST WORDS."

"USE THE 'FORCE,'" HUH?! FOLKS, I THINK WE'VE JUST BEEN SUCKERED.

Uh, GUYS, CAN'T YOU TAKE A JOKE?

THOSE, *Katzchen*, ARE WHAT YOU CALL...

NEXT ISSUE

A SHOCKING SURPRISE AWAITS OUR HEROES BACK IN NEW YORK! BE HERE IN 30 DAYS AS GUEST PENCILER **JIM SHERMAN** HELPS PRESENT:

X-MEN MINUS ONE!

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